UNIQUE HAITI

NEGOTIATING VIEWS IN A HISTORIC LANDSCAPE SHAPED BY MISCONCEPTIONS, FEAR AND NOTIONS OF POVERTY

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Unique Haiti – Negotiating views in a historic landscape shaped by misconceptions, fear and notions of poverty

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Abstract

This thesis is concerned with tourism in Haiti and how people negotiate views in a *contested space*. I argue that Haiti is a *contested space* because of the various meanings that are ascribed to the country. I explore how a *contested space* can become a *tourist space* by examining how visitors move around in the country and create their concept of Haiti, and how this may contrast to other imaginaries of Haiti, particularly the imaginaries held by the Ministry of Tourism and small-scale businesses involved in tourism. By referring to a visitor definition of a traveler, I am able to include various types of *guests* in Haiti who do not conform to a stereotypical notion of a *tourist.*

Amongst many visitors, Haiti as spatial category entails fear, notions of poverty, and misconceptions – ideas that originate from actual physical experiences. I show how the various concepts of Haiti are *constructed.* Haiti's Ministry of Tourism, *Ministère du Tourisme,* also play their part in constructing an image of Haiti as *unique,* an attempt to promote Haiti abroad in order to attract more visitors to the nation.

This means that the spatial shape of Haiti is constructed by what I refer to as *spacemakers*. These are individuals found not only amongst travelers, but also as employees in the Ministry of Tourism and in the small-scale tourist businesses that I have documented. The latter of these *spacemakers* act as a medium through which visitors can explore Haiti. As the Ministry of Tourism is dependent on creating spatial categories that emphasize Haiti's positive features, it is important to explore the creation of Haiti's various spatial categories through experiences that involve actual movement around in the country. This may help the Ministry of Tourism with promoting an image of Haiti that visitors want to engage in.

Overall, I make a point of examining the various experiences described by visitors in relation to a historical perspective. This serves the purpose of contextualizing some of the experiences described and demystifying some of the ideas held about Haiti.

Preface

First and foremost I wish to express my gratitude to all the people I met in Haiti who gave me a great insight into a country and a culture to which there is much that many people can learn from. A special gratitude goes out to the informants who took me in explicitly and showed an interest in my project, and who further helped the collection of relevant material for this thesis. These people are Jacqualine "Jacqui" Labrom, Maurice Etienne, and Joe Cross.

As the writing of this thesis has progressed, I have benefited greatly from the academic input of two supervisors. I would like to thank my primary supervisor, Professor Arnd Schneider, for taking an interest in Haiti, stating that I had good ethnography and encouraging me to write it out early in the process of producing this thesis. I would also like to thank Professor Wenzel Geissler, who has supervised the final stages of this thesis. His insights have contributed to sorting out my topics, producing a more "streamlined" argumentation throughout the thesis, and identify key concepts. I thank you both.

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On a final note, I would like to thank my parents, friends and family for their support, with a special note to Sandra Fiabema. She has been a wonderful supporter from beginning to end in the unfolding of this thesis. Thank you!

Map No. 3855 Rev. 4 UNITED NATIONS
June 2008

Department of Field Support
Cartographic Section

Map of Haiti (United Nations 2008).

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1|Introduction: Tourism where there are few tourists

As the airplane landed at Toussaint L'Ouverture International Airport the landscape instantly caught my attention. Behind the white concrete building that housed our terminal, I saw barren, limestone-covered hills. During our flight's descent to Port-au-Prince, the overview revealed a stark difference in the landscape between Haiti and its neighboring country, the Dominican Republic. Deforestation has reportedly left only 3% forest cover in Haiti compared to 40% in the Dominican Republic (Williams 2011, 22), which occupies the other two thirds of the Caribbean island Hispaniola. This means that there are few trees left in Haiti.

Upon entering the terminal, Toussaint L'Ouverture International Airport came across as any other airport in Western Europe or the United States of America (USA), quite ordinary looking. The airport had recently been renovated and new sections had been added to it. As I passed through immigration control, I noticed the general state of cleanliness, waxed floors and newly painted surfaces marked recent airport refurbishment. The air-conditioning installed provided a cool atmosphere to an otherwise hot Monday afternoon. However, as I entered the baggage reclaim area, the spectacle began.

Despite the impression of professionalism projected by the red and blue uniformed support personnel, the room was filled with a sense of chaos. I heard shouts from new arrivals, people trying to gain an overview. As they tried to locate their pre-scheduled carrier, uniformed red and blue service personnel approached them and asked intensely, "*français ou anglais?": "*French or English?", while taking the visitors' bags as a service, one that they would later request a tip for. Caught in the midst of everything, I spotted what looked like a missionary family of seven people. They wore shoes and garments that were a mix of conservative clothing dated from the 1950's and hats that were 17th

century-fashion. They had gathered near the wall by the exit, the father standing guard at the front, looking anxious as the family of seven was confronted by a world they seemed to know little or nothing about. Haitian Creole[1] and French are the two official languages in Haiti, and English is rarely spoken amongst the majority of the population. Many visitors are often dependent on meeting up with their courier or local representative just to get off the airport grounds.

I too was met by red and blue-uniformed personnel in the arrivals hall, keen to take my bag. After saying no to several offers, I let one man carry my bag for about 60 meters into the waiting hall while I held on to my surfboard bag. Instantly I could see that the waiting hall belonged to the older section of the airport. It was narrow with no seating and had an unmanned stand from the Ministry of Tourism. Any board detailing the different flight arrivals was nowhere to be found. My courier wanted $US20 for the job; I tipped him $US2, approximately a third of what someone makes per day on a minimum government-regulated salary at the time.[2] A uniformed guard by the glass window near the exit sported Ray Ban aviator sunglasses, whilst attempting to keep eager outsiders from getting in.

Outside, numerous people had clumped together, offering various services to people exiting the terminal. Taxi and chauffeur services, guide services, and accommodation such as hotels, guesthouses and hostels. Inside the terminal I had befriended a surfer who was in Haiti to report for *surfEXPLORE*, a surf travel journal. Erwan Simon was an experienced traveler and had visited Haiti before. He neatly summed up the spectacle outside: “They talk fast, stand close, but they are not dangerous”.

[1] Henceforth, referred to only as creole in the thesis.
[2] Post fieldwork, I checked the numerous statements I collected on what the governmental minimum wage was. I found that they are in fact quite consistent with other reports (Lall 2014) on minimum wage offered by the Haitian government. For private employment, there was no minimum wage.

Speaking of danger

From the airport, I phoned a local budget-class hotel[3] that sent a driver to collect me at the airport for the price of US$30. The next day, with Erwan's words in mind, I set out to explore Port-au-Prince by foot. Despite numerous teachers and fellow students dissuading me from visiting, I had grown even more curious of Haiti and its vivid history. Before traveling, I was met with many prejudiced views of Haiti, with people who had never visited perceiving it as a place of danger. Characterized as one of the most stigmatized countries in the Caribbean, this negative image often precedes Haiti (Moncrieffe 2007, 81). Although I draw on historian Philippe Girard (2010) for the parts of the historical contextualization in this thesis, Girard's writing can also be characterized partly as the academic version of this stigma, something particularly visible in his description of how Haiti, a "broken nation", has come into being (Girard 2010).[4]

The image of a *broken nation* is frequently found outside the context of academia. For instance, in announcements aimed to address public safety. Travel warnings can scare potential visitors off visiting the western part of Hispaniola where Haiti is located. The UK Foreign Office advises to "take caution when travelling to Haiti" (GOV.UK 2014). Some go even further. The American travel advisory suggests to all visitors: "alternate your travel routes, and keep doors and windows in homes and vehicles closed and locked" (U.S. Department of State 2014). The Canadian travel advisory encourages visitors to "exercise a high degree of caution" (Government of Canada 2014). A typical negative image is often found in various media reporting on the political instability and violence in the country.

In my project outline I talked about the spatial representation of Haiti as a dangerous place. I reviewed statistics to try and contextualize the notion of danger that many people spoke of. The 2010 homicide statistics of the United

[3] As I will address later, this does not mean it is cheap. Budget-class hotels often range from $US 50-70. This one cost $US69, per night.
[4] Furthermore, I have discovered two historical errors in his book that I use for this thesis. The errors are regarding the age of Jean-Claude Duvalier when he came into office, he was 19 not 18 years, and the year which he married Michèle Bennett, was in 1980 not 1982.

Nations Office on Drugs and Crimes (UNODC) lists Haiti's homicide count at 689 people per annum whose deaths were considered "violent deaths" resulting from criminal offences. This is extremely low relative to the rest of the Caribbean region. For instance, in the same year the Dominican Republic had a homicide rate of 2472 per annum, four times that of Haiti (UNODC 2011, 93). Both countries have roughly the same population of 10 million (Central Intelligence Agency 2015a, 2015b). However, Haiti was the country cited on the U.S. travel-warning list in 2013, with no reference to the Dominican Republic (CNN 2013). Based on this choice by the U.S. government, one would expect violence and homicide rates to have increased in Haiti. And yet, the UNODC shows exactly the opposite. A 2014 report announced a decrease in homicides, rape and kidnappings in 2013. Furthermore, the report clearly states that the statistics hide the nuances in the country (UNDOC 2014, 85).

Despite an overall decrease in homicides, in 2012 over 75% of Haiti's reported murders took place in Port-au-Prince. Nevertheless, that year the homicide rate in Haiti was still only half of that of the Dominican Republic (UNODC 2014, 85). Moreover, there has been a sharp reduction in kidnappings between 2012 and 2013. 2011-2012 also saw a sharp decrease relative to the following year (Canada: Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada 2014). The UNODC's report of 2014 does not take lightly Haiti's amount of "violent deaths" compared with other Caribbean nations because the recent decrease in violence was preceded by an increase from 2007-2011 (UNODC 2014, 85). An image of Haiti as a poor, violent and unsafe place is found amongst visitors and certainly shape travelers' perceptions of Haiti. However, I found that many of these fears are not based on actual experiences of violence. Nevertheless, to say that visitors are completely untouched by violence in Haiti would be false.

An informant told me about a recent armed robbery that struck a visitor while walking in Port-au-Prince's upper-class district. Another case that caused much discussion amongst many NGO workers in Jacmel was the murder of a Canadian who was shot dead, by bandits on a motorcycle after withdrawing US$1000 at an Automated Teller Machine (ATM) in Port-au-Prince (Associated Press 2013).

However, such cases are not the norm, and other countries in Latin America and the Caribbean face a similar problem with violence that sometimes affects travelers within the country. Thus, if Haiti's rate is significantly lower than many other popular tourist destinations in the Caribbean, one may also come to understand why Haiti's former Prime Minister Laurent Lamothe stated in 2013 "Haiti is one of the safest destinations, not only in the Caribbean, but in all of Latin America" (Ferreira 2013).[5]

This is not an attempt to trivialize the parts of Haiti's history that has been marked by violence and threats to peoples' security. However, I would like to emphasize Haiti's relative safety compared to other Caribbean countries, as many of my informants have done. Secondly, I wish to describe Haiti through a historical context that shows how the country has had marked *periods of violence* that do not represent the general state of the nation.

Creating a new economy out of tourism

To choose Haiti as field to study tourism might seem like an odd choice. In a global context, the country suffers not only a terrible reputation abroad, but is also subjected to misconception and contradictions which are simply not representative of experiences, instead drawing on speculation. Anthropologists Setha M. Low and Denise Lawrence-Zúñiga considers "contested spaces" to be social conflicts taking place on particular sites, geographic locations where conflicts form. Further, they state that conflicts regarding "contested spaces" center on the meanings given to these sites, or the meaning derived from their interpretation (Low and Lawrence-Zúñiga 2003, 20). Independent of Haiti being a *contested space*, actual empirical knowledge cannot be formed without movement. Thus, any person's knowledge of Haiti will be limited until he or she has actually been to Haiti and "experienced it".

"Experience it" is one of the slogans from Haiti's Ministry of Tourism: *Ministère du Tourisme,* and a key phrase that I use in this thesis. I will take as point of

[5] Due to political unrest and disagreement Laurent Lamothe has had to resign in December 2014 (Campanale 2014).

departure the image promoted by the ministry, whose aim is to attract new visitors to the country. Currently, Haiti has several difficulties connected to infrastructure and providing enough employment for its population. Over forty percent are unemployed (Central Intelligence Agency 2015a), and many more do not earn a living wage that can support their families. This was characterized by a phrase I heard again and again in various forms from close informants, "*La vie en Haïti, c'est dur pour moi*": "Life in Haiti, it is tough for me". The measures taken by the 2011 government, fronted by President Michel Martelly, have ambitions to improve Haiti's economic development partly through tourism. This is taking place under the slogan: "Haiti is open for business". Some refer to Haiti as the republic of NGOs due to the nation's dependency on foreign aid and humanitarian organizations to provide basic humanitarian needs to its citizens. One measure aimed at strengthening the economy was the recently implemented strategy by the Haitian government that ensured the only available currency at ATMs was *Haitian gourdes (HTG)*, the national currency. By doing so, an increased use of the currency aims to strengthen its value. During my visit in the spring of 2013, US$1 = HTG42, 5.

Through participant observation in small-scale businesses involved in tourism, I examine experiences described by foreigners who visited various parts of Haiti. Many of these visitors have ventured outside of the "all-inclusive" hotel and beach resorts and into a landscape that may seem chaotic. It is possible to ascribe characteristics to a landscape based on how it looks. However, as different people move through a landscape they ascribe different meanings to it, resulting in spatial shapes that may vary from person to person. Hence, landscape are more than physical places, they are also socially constructed (Rodman 2003, 216-217). Haiti's tourism industry is in a state of revival that aims to bring back the previous success the country had in the late 1940's to late 1950's as the most visited country in the Caribbean (Séraphin 2014, 25-36). However, the infrastructure is currently not in place to accommodate a large number of tourists.

A tourist visiting a new country will often be enrolled or expect enrollment in several tourist-orientated services such as, transport, concierge and translation service. This is part of what Sociologist John Urry (2002) has called the "tourist gaze". As I will expand on when I discuss *Visitor Typology* in the section below, expectations will vary depending on the "type" of tourist concerned. Despite having documented different typologies of tourists, many visitors describe parts of Haiti, particularly Port-au-Prince, as very chaotic and dangerous. Often this danger is "imagined". By this I mean that their "worrying" is based on a perception, or as some say, a *potential of danger*, a fear of what might happen in the places they have visited, rather than based on actual physical experiences involving danger. This can be represented in the use of the word *blan*. Key informants, whom I will introduce later, say: "it only means foreigner". However, as we learn in Chapter 3, some visitors find the use of the word problematic and are worried when locals refer to them as *blan*. In that sense, it can further reinforce the separation between *hosts* and *guests that* already exist between *locals* and *visitors*.

Haiti consists of beautiful natural scenery, miles of undeveloped white-sand beaches, a rich and diverse culture, and an exciting cuisine. By culture I mean, the ideas, customs and social behavior (Barfield 1997, 98-99) of people in Haiti. The Ministry of Tourism is not shy of highlighting this in their promotion of Haiti; often emphasizing that Haiti has a history and something *unique* to offer that sets it apart from many of the other Caribbean states (Beaubien 2013). Haiti's beautiful features are promoted in advertisement campaigns, with even a billboard along one of Miami's city center avenues in the USA (CBS Miami 2012), and represented at tourist conventions. However, Haiti's interesting and often beautiful features are spread out in a landscape that can sometimes be difficult to navigate as a first time visitor. Nevertheless, it is this "rich" and "unique" image of Haiti that the Ministry of Tourism is attempting to promote. Epitomized in their slogan and advertising campaign, the Ministry of Tourism invites the tourist to come "experience it!" In French the slogan reads: *"vivez l'expérience!"*: "live the experience*".* In Creole: "se la pou'w la" which directly translates into: "it

is there for you" (Ministère du Tourisme 2014). The Ministry of Tourism is dependent on creating an image of the Haitian tourist *space* as a safe *place.*

Impression management

Visitors who were unbiased were not the norm. The more common encounters I had were with visitors who often had negative concern about visiting Haiti. The Ministry of Tourism is reliant on *impression management f*or the increased influx of tourists to keep rising, depicting positive accounts of their experience in Haiti once they return home. By this, I mean that the Ministry of Tourism is dependent on showing off a good side of the country that leaves the visitor with positive impressions of Haiti as a viable tourist destination.[6] As a result, the Ministry of Tourism has produced a promotional campaign that seems to be working, reporting a 21,1 percent increase in tourist visits in 2013 (Caribbean Journal staff 2014). The Minister of Tourism, Stéphanie Balmir Villedrouin, is the body's foremost representative. She not only attends travel conventions, but also engages in dialogues with other countries, promoting Haiti as a viable tourist destination. Under Villedrouin's authority, new hotels are being built in Port-au-Prince (Charles 2015, Troutman 2015) and more airlines have introduced flights to Haiti (Haiti Libre 2013, 2014, Caribbean Journal staff 2015).

The images emphasized in these campaigns also contribute towards creating the "tourist gaze" amongst visitors in Haiti. Urry suggests that visitors construct various "signs" which he believes sum up familiar elements in a particular culture (Urry 2002, 1-15), meaning that people can identify *objects* or certain *actions* to a place. A hallmark object, such as the Eiffel Tower in Paris, or an action, such as two people kissing in Paris, might symbolize the essence of the city for the tourist. This represents the way the *tourist gaze* may define that culture (Urry 2002, 3, 12). Visitors who have seen the promotions encouraging them to visit Haiti are also likely to have constructed "signs" that they ascribe to Haiti. Such "gazes" help create anticipations in travelers about what they will encounter on their trip (Urry 2002). This shows that the tourist plays an active

[6] I believe it is a viable tourist destination and can further develop as one, seeing the great potential I witnessed in the field and structures already in place to handle the arrival of more tourists.

role in negotiating the landscape he or she moves around in, and it is not just determined by how successful a promotional campaign is.

One of my informants, a tour guide operator and owner of "*Lakou Lakay Centre Culturel*[7]" in Milot, Maurice Etienne, summarized this succinctly when he described his own interactions with visitors. "You need to have a sense of what to say". He paused, then added: "you have to let them react, otherwise you kill yourself talking". Ultimately, as Maurice told me, the experience of the tourist "is what it is", emphasizing that we cannot decide what they will think, but we can try to give them the best experience possible. This shows that the Ministry of Tourism will never be able to control what the visitor thinks, as tourists in Haiti also construct *their own* concept of Haiti. As tourism develops in the country, we will just have to wait and see what the "tourist gaze" will consist of with regard to Haiti.

Movement in a spatial landscape

In this thesis my analysis puts emphasis on spatial representations of Haiti as a place. This research focus spun out of an original idea to look at business identity[8] amongst small-scale businesses working in Haitian tourism. However, I quickly discovered that what was on everybody's lips was the perception of Haiti, and how this affected travel to the country. Thus, I decided to research how the *contested space* of Haiti, vastly different in people's opinions, could be a place of tourism; a place people would want to go to.

In his 1974 book titled *the production of space*[9] sociologist Henri Lefebvre (1991 [1974]] describes what he calls *social space.* This term denotes how the various meanings human beings ascribe a place, such as a city or a country, are constructed by the various peoples who have had some sort of relation to that place. However, this does not mean that they have constructed their meaning based on a direct experience. Lefebvre uses the example of Venice, a culturally significant city to many people; despite that many have never been there

[7] Cultural Centre.
[8] Largely inspired by Yanagisako (2002).
[9] Original title in French: *La Production de l'espace*. The book was translated to English in 1991.

physically themselves (Lefebvre 1991 [1974], 72-77). The visitors I have met in Haiti have all formed an impression from having physical visited Haiti.[10] Their experiences are based on movement through a *contested landscape*. In order to describe how different people negotiate, communicate, and relate to different imaginaries of Haiti, I also use the word "discourse", written and spoken communication (Ingold 1994, 536). In case of Haiti, some discourses that people promote, or relate to, are not based on experiences from people who have not actually been to Haiti.

David Harvey (2006) summarizes Lefebvre's work on space by analyzing three spatial categories that can serve as a tool for contextualizing people's experiences. He states that regardless of people having physically been in the same *material space*, such as Port-au-Prince International Airport, people may have different experiences or ways of looking at the same place. He calls this, *representations of space*. At the same time, these individuals have to relate to other discourses and images that already exist; what Harvey calls, "*spaces of representation"* (Harvey 2006, 130-131). Media-reports are a good example of this latter space. In the case of Haiti, people have read up on different sources that state different things before coming there, and this has contributed to shaping their perception or, i*mage* of Haiti. Harvey's terminology is useful when one makes a point to separate the landscape that people *move* through and the meaning they *ascribe* to it, rather than simply referring to *landscape* which as an analytical category entails both these connotations (Low and Lawrence-Zúñiga 2003). For contextualizing some of the experiences described by people in this thesis I refer to Harvey's threefold terminology of space discussed here.

These *categories of space* should be read as dialectic, not as hierarchical to each other when conceptualizing how space is conceived by an individual (Harvey 2006, 130-132). I read this as Harvey stating that it is not possible to say which *category of space* is responsible for what, as the relationship itself is non-causal, but rather dialectic, effecting each other. This argument build directly on Lefebvre's understanding of these spatial categories as "distinguishable yet not

[10] Chad in Chapter 4 is the only exception, I only met him *en route* to Haiti.

separable" (Lefebvre [1974] 1991, 85). In regards to the creation of opinions amongst people concerning Haiti I view the creation of these opinions as dialectic. They are dependent not only on the persons' background and experiences, but also on where the person has been in Haiti, and the means by which the person chooses to explore Haiti, such as tourist dependent small-scale businesses.

In short, this theoretical framework is useful to keep in mind when I explore how different visitors in Haiti can have vastly different opinions or experiences from their visit. The purpose is then not to try to explain why people featured in this thesis have formed the opinions they have. Such an ability to be truly *in* people's minds is not one that anthropology possesses as anthropologist Barbara Myerhoff (1990, 245-246) points out; here, our discipline is "traditionally weak". Lefebvre and Harvey's theoretical framework concerning space is useful to keep in mind when looking at the experiences described by visitors, in order to come nearer an understanding of how they are formed, and how Haiti can be "presented" to visitors so that they may form positive experiences. A unified experience in a spatial landscape that is the Haiti I have documented is perhaps not possible. Nor is it perhaps "desired" as the Ministry of Tourism promotes Haiti as something different, or *unique.* Rather, my aim is to show through ethnography how these different discourses of Haiti are created.

Visitor typology

Erik Cohen (1974) lists in his paper, "*Who is a tourist: a conceptual classification*", "tourist types", as a schema for categorizing types of visitors. The types of tourists include: *organized mass tourist*, *individual mass tourist*, *the explorer*, and *the drifter*. Valene L. Smith (1989, 12) the author of *Hosts and Guests: the anthropology of tourism,* lists seven different types of tourists from *explorer* to *charter tourist.* The point of such categorization is partly aimed at understanding what the tourist will expect when visiting a new place. In his book, *An Introduction to Tourism Anthropology*, Peter Burns (1999) states that although such typologies add to our knowledge of tourists they contribute little in a "deeper" understanding of tourists. I have listed these typologies here to serve as

a reference point for the reader when reading about the different visitors in this thesis. However, I have not followed categorizing the visitors I discuss into such typologies, as it is not practical, nor relevant for the scope of this thesis. Rather, I make a point of linking the purpose of the individual's visits together with their *mobility*. By the latter, I mean where they have been in Haiti and whether they speak the language.

In the last thirty years, Haiti has not been perceived as a typical tourist destination. As a result, it has received very few tourists. With this in mind, I use the concept of "hosts and guests" first introduced by Smith (1977) in her original publication by the same name. Alluding to various "tourist types" as *guests*, allows for a richer typology that goes beyond the understanding of tourists as visitors who visit only for pleasure. By using the word, *guest* as equal to the word *visitor* I allow for a broader incorporation of people who engage in tourist activities, but are often in Haiti for other purposes not directly linked to tourism. I call these activities *task-oriented.* Such people include Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) workers, United Nations (UN) workers, other organizational workers, researchers, and missionaries.

What is a tourist?

Smith (2001) states that a definitive history of tourism is yet to be written. However, she claims that regardless of which era in human history tourism started,[11] tourism in abundance has existed where there has been wage earners with a *discretionary income* and *leisure time*, who received *positive social sanctions* for traveling (Smith 2001, 17-22).

Smith (1989, 1) has acknowledged that the term tourist can be hard to define because it may involve people who we do not ordinarily perceive as tourists: "Business travelers and convention-goers can combine conferences with tourist-type activities". This is similar to what I observed. The largest part of the clientele in the businesses I studied were people with jobs or voluntary

[11] Smith (2001) also shows how tourism was present in preindustrial society in various indigenous cultures; however, the base of her argument rests on these more recent historical events.

commitments within the country. However, in my *visitor* definition, which involves both tourists and *task-oriented* people, who also seek out pleasurable activities, I am less rigid about maintaining a distinction. This is because I believe it is not worthwhile to emphasize a clear divide between the two groups.

Brian is a good example of this. He is a white American volunteer worker in his twenties who was working on a medical project outside the city of Cap-Haïtien, in Northern Haiti. At first the arrangement only included free accommodation during his stay, and Brian had to cover the costs of his own airfare. However, because the organization he worked for was pleased with the service he provided, it decided to pay for his flights and took the initiative to prolong his stay. Brian had "been around" developing regions of the world before. He had done some volunteer work for an organization in India, then "spent some time in Botswana" during College. He had visited Haiti before in October 2011, and said he "was aware of the need". You could say Brian was accustomed to a context where there was an obvious humanitarian need around him. However, it was not humanitarian need that was the main topic of our conversation but the events surrounding his visit.

Brian enjoyed several aspects about being in Haiti. He enjoyed the weather, the natural surroundings and was curious about the cultural differences from his home country, the USA. More importantly, when Brian was not working, he deliberately sought out new experiences. Despite sometimes expressing a concern over things he found scary,[12] Brian said: "I'm not worried about it enough to prevent me from doing things". However, Brian found it peculiar that I asked him about all these things concerning tourism, stating, "I'm not really a tourist". In fact, he considered the questions more suited for someone who had come here solely for the purpose of wanting to travel here out of work. He was not alone. When I talked about my project in and out of Haiti quite a few people thought it odd that tourists would travel to Haiti and that an anthropologists

[12] "People with machetes" was one thing Brian expressed a concern over. Brian was also worried about the driving on the roads which had "poor lighting", many poorly maintained roads and a quite a few "*move chofè*": "bad drivers".

would go there to study tourism. However, I argue that it is suitable to consider Brian to be a tourist, as well as a volunteer worker.

The terms *tourist* and *travel* have become redefined through anthropological studies on tourism during the past four decades. In essence, research in the field of tourism has contributed to making the definition more profound, and allowing for the incorporation of several types of tourism and tourists (Smith and Brent 2001). Smith (1989) orientates herself away from trying to maintain a strict definition of *tourists* and *locals*. Rather she operates with the terms "hosts" and "guests". Here, Smith signifies that *guests* are people who consciously seek out new experience, and *hosts* are people in the environment where this experience is sought out. However, as the term "tourist" is widely used in literature Smith offers a definition. She states that, "in general, a tourist is a temporarily leisured person who voluntarily visits a place away from home for the purpose of experiencing change" (Smith 1989, 1). Thus, if you have spare time and go somewhere outside your home to experience some sort of change, then you are by broader definition a tourist. Smith, along with Maryann Brent, addressed *tourism issues* again in *Hosts and Guests Revisited* (2001). Together they point out that there is still a great deal of content to be covered in the field of tourism. This validates the maintenance of a broad use of the term tourist.

In this sense, Brian, and several of the purpose oriented guests I met in Haiti are definitely tourists. They all choose to do something that involves experiencing something different in their leisure time. As I put forth in a discussion of the *working class tourist* in Chapter 2, the importance of adopting a broad definition of the term tourist is again highlighted.

Enclave industries versus small-scale businesses

Concerning "enclave capitalism", James Ferguson (2006) shows how money and welfare "jumps" in a globalized economy, from developing nations on the African continent to the West. In his book, *Global Shadows,* Ferguson deconstructs the image of capitalism as a system generating wealth that spreads, or "flows", geographically in the same area where economic development is taking place.

Rather, wealth is in his words, “extracted”. Here, Ferguson uses the Angola oil fields and the diamond-producing region of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), as part of the basis for his analysis. Instances like the diamond rich Mbuji-Mayi in the DRC are “exclusionary spatial enclaves” (2006, 37) patrolled by private security companies who further help to separate the wealth physically from the rest of DRC society (Ferguson 2006, 25-49).

Linda K. Richter (1992, 35) has described political instability as endemic in much of the developing world. However, tourism seems a fruitful industry to promote as other ways of generating wealth may be difficult for less industrialized countries. Richter calls this a “paradox”. In developing nations, tourism is promoted as taking place in an unspoiled paradise, even though vast amounts of people in these regions are struggling to satisfy basic humanitarian needs. More recently, Richter (2001) has discussed the lessons learned from having an economically successful tourist industry in the Philippines, despite being in the midst of President Marcos brutal notoriously military regime. She points out that having a successful tourist industry may not necessarily bring development to the rest of the people in the country. Large hotel development is known to employ fewer people locally, as this type of tourist industry makes use of more imports, especially foodstuffs, and has more automated processes, such as in cleaning, food processing, and recreational services (Richter 2001, 287). This is where small-scale businesses are relevant for Haiti.

The small-scale businesses are spaces where many of Haiti’s features can be experienced for the visitor. Therefore, I have emphasized their importance. Furthermore, because many the small-scale businesses in Haiti are reliant on local resources to function, they are not able to separate themselves, nor their economy, from the rest of society. This leads to an economic exchange with local people, benefiting the local community. This can be seen in restaurants’ in Haiti and their use of local fishermen to collect lobsters, or guide businesses and hotels employing locals as secretaries, assistant guides and administrators. Most notably, such businesses are more unable to barricade themselves away from the

surrounding society, enabling the visitor to come in contact with more of Haiti than he or she would behind the walls of large-scale resort.

A "small-scale business" can be hard to define, with the approximate size of such businesses varying from country to country. However, measuring annual sales and maintaining a maximum number of employees can often serve as a proxy indicator for what can be defined as a small-scale business. For instance in England, the scale of a small-scale business is defined as one employing fewer than 200 people and having annual sales of two million pounds or less (Gray, Cooley, and Lutabingwa 1997). All the small-scale business in this thesis employs less than 200 people.

Haiti's tourist industry is underdeveloped, as many of my informants put it. They referred to Haiti's lack of infrastructure as a problem, visible in the absence of enough good roads, stable electricity, enough hotels, and price competitiveness with the Dominican Republic on hotel rooms. To combat the fluctuating electricity current, most Haitian hotels charging more than $US60 per night have power generators. The presence of large international hotel chains was still rare in Haiti when I conducted my fieldwork. Although such structures are being built (Charles 2015, Troutman 2015), it has not yet reached the scale of the Dominican Republic. In fact, many people working in the tourism industry considered Haiti years away from achieving the level of development in tourism currently held by the Dominican Republic.

The Dominican Republic has developed what can be termed as an industrial tourist industry, with plenty of large international hotel chains functioning as spatial enclaves. The country receives about seven times as many tourists as Haiti (Myers 2014) [13] and has developed large areas into *tourist regions* along its coastline (Théodat 2004, Dominican Republic Tourism Ministry 2015). See appendix A for a map of this. Anthropologist Tilman Freitag has studied the tourist development in the Dominican Republic and showed how the development of "tourist zones" in these *tourist regions* has given tourists certain

[13] 2013 figures, Haiti: 643,000 tourists, Dominican Republic: 4,7 million tourists (Myers 2014).

"safe zones", where they can venture and will recognize plenty of services sought by tourists (Freitag 1994). I argue that these "tourist zones" can also be viewed as another way of exposing tourists to the images desired by the Dominican state. Not only can "enclave resorts" be thought to minimize economic exchange between *hosts* and *guests* (Freitag 1996), but they also minimize the amount of cultural exchange that takes place between the visitor and the rest of Dominican society.

Nevertheless, regardless of the enclave characteristics of the hotel resorts Freitag describes, they can be regarded as *tourist spaces*, because they meet some of the expectations of the *tourist gaze* and incorporate them into the visitors' physical surroundings. Certainly enclave-like resorts are found in Haiti as well. However, what sets the Dominican Republic apart from Haiti is the development of "tourist zones" (Freitag 1994, 541) well featured in many of the coastal cities where tourists venture. The "tourist zones" are spaces where tourists can move around featured in beaches, cities and golf courses (Gregory 2014) to name some examples. Since Freitag's fieldwork, Anthropologist Steven Gregory (2014) has shown how the Dominican Republic has sought to further develop these "tourist zones" into vast areas sometimes represented in entire sections of the city barricaded in as part of a tourist zone (Gregory 2014, 52-91).

More notably, Haiti has its own aspect of such an enclave industry evident with the cruise ship tourism that has been present in Labadee since the 1970s. Located about 12 km from Cap-Haïtien in North Haiti, a thick surrounding iron wall, protected by armed guards on the inside, isolates the cruise ship tourist from the surrounding community. Robert E. Wood (2000, 361) describes Labadee, and how the destination is sometimes marketed as a "private island" in traveling brochures. When Haiti suffers bad press abroad, the Royal Caribbean Cruise has not always informed their tourists that they were going to Haiti. Rather they have referred to it as only *Labadee,* the name of the port, or simply *Hispaniola* (Dowling 2006, 316). This further enhances Labadee's characteristic as an enclave industry. By not mentioning Haiti in the marketing discourse, it distracts visitors from any potential fears and misconceptions they might

already have about the place. This ensures that Labadee can function no matter how bad Haiti's reputation is abroad. This discussion is continued in Chapter 4.

Locations and methodology

The research for this thesis is based on a four and half month multi-sited fieldwork in the established and emerging tourist industry in Haiti in the period January 28 – June 13, 2013. By the use of the term "multi-sited" I refer to a fieldwork where the anthropologist works in several areas, adding layers to the analysis while striving to attain an analysis that connects global, national and local events into a "coherent body of social analysis" (Van De Berg 2000, 76). During my stay I engaged in trips between the provinces *Nord*, *Ouest* and *Sud-Est*[14] visiting the cities and towns of Cap-Haïtien, Milot (approximately 21km south of Cap-Haïtien), Port-au-Prince and Jacmel. By doing so I covered some of the local differences across the country. My visits to each of these provinces were divided up in several trips between each province. This means that the longest I stayed in one place was six weeks and one week at the shortest.

The research conducted involved tour guides, tour company owners, hotel owners, restaurant owners, bar owners, hotel and bar managers, tour guide trainers, clients (the visitors), as well different people in the Ministry of Tourism; bureaucrats, statisticians, park directors, The Minister and other clerks employed in the ministerial apparatus. I conducted informal semi-structured interviews, participant observation, sometimes both, with all of the aforementioned groups. Most people remained positive to appear by their given names and relation in this thesis. However, relevant people have been made anonymous in order to ensure that they will not be harmed by my research.

My use of *Unique Haiti* is an emic term, a result of the various descriptions actors in my field have used to characterize Haiti and what sets it apart from other destinations, for better or for worse in their views.[15] With the viewpoint of three different parties, reflecting the visitors, the companies and the Ministry of

[14] North, East and Southeast.
[15] Many informants have called Haiti "unique" and thus the phrasing *Unique Haiti* was chosen.

Tourism's perspective, in addition to the fieldwork taking place in different locations it is indeed multi-sited. With this perspective I do not claim to possess the full overview of the field of Haitian tourism. Rather this context has served as a point of reference for the state of the tourism industry where I went.

My approach resembles what anthropologist George E. Marcus (1995, 95, 102) calls "tracking strategies". Here, in between locations, the ethnographer makes comparisons as *the shape of what he or she studies emerges between sites*. In other words, the ethnographer finds a relevant theme to study that he or she searches for in all sites. In my case this theme was *tourism*, represented by tourist businesses in Port-au-Prince, Jacmel, Cap-Haïtien and Milot, their respective clients, as well the differences between these sites. As Marcus points out, such *focus points* in the field are not known beforehand but are in themselves what contribute to making up the connected "real-world sites" of investigation. Ultimately, even if one has conducted a more geographically centered, "single-site" fieldwork, a useful question is whether or not what has been locally observed can be connected to a similar phenomenon observed in a " 'worlds-apart' site" (Marcus 1995, 111). Anthropologist William R. Van De Berg (2000, 78) argues that in carrying out ethnography on what is part of the global system cannot be done under what he calls "the rubric of the traditional single-sited field 'site' ". Tourism in its nature today, can certainly be defined as a global industry.

Marcus argues that in writing up one's field notes, whether or not from a "single-site" or a multi-sited ethnography, the observed material interacts with theories and practices connected to the global world system (Marcus 1995, 112). Had I only conducted my fieldwork in Port-au-Prince, where I started out, I might have drawn very different conclusions than what I am able to do now, based on my multi-sited fieldwork. Part of my motivation for moving out of Port-au-Prince was a desire to capture more of the nuances in Haiti's tourist landscape, particularly because the visitors went to so many other places than simply Port-au-Prince. Anthropologist Dennis Nash (1996) states that when trying to make sense of what he calls the "touristic system" there are numerous instances to

take into account (Nash 1996, 11). In terms of security in Haiti, a large proportion of negative perceptions are based solely on Port-au-Prince. Therefore it seems only natural that engagement should be extended to different geographical locations.

1. Haitian means of transportation, from the left, *moto,* on top a *taptap,* and on the bottom a *bus.*

I explored several cities and towns, interviewed and talked to several companies, and their clients in order to add a more comparative dimension to my data. Otherwise, I would not have to been able to gauge what was "normal", in terms of the experiences visitors described.[16] This required talking to and doing participant observation not only between different companies in one location,

[16] In addition this was important in order to understand how the businesses functioned in terms of payment, number of employees, relation to clients, marketing, networking and views on government efforts to promote and develop Haiti's tourist industry.

but also in other locations. I needed to see for myself in what kind of surroundings a traveler would have to orientate him or herself. Would travelers be able to shift around freely and explore the country independently, or would they be required to move within the established parameter of a company or an organization? In order to find out I made use of the possible travel routes and options available for visitors in Haiti between and at the different sites. This meant taking use of domestic plane routes, private transportation by 4X4 car, *taptap* (a pick-up truck with seating often covered with a roof and walls), large trucks with seating, minibuses, taxi, and *motos* (a local name for local entrepreneurs using motorcycles and mopeds to offer a taxi-service). I had to engage with the "material space" (Harvey 2006, 130) of my informants in order to have a reference to what my informants were talking about.

Gender could also have been a viable focus in my analysis. However, the goal of this thesis is not to bring forth gender differences in experiences. Rather, it is to point out how visitors describe their experiences in Haiti. In that sense, gender is implied as a reason for why some of these experiences can be different, but without further investigation into this matter I cannot claim its supremacy in affecting the various experiences documented. By talking about *space*, I take into consideration that all experiences, regardless of gender, may vary in some way from person to person.

Gaining access

The hotel that picked me up at the airport was in the budget-class and charged $US69[17] per night for a single room. It had Wi-Fi access and was only 20 meters from Rue[18] Capois, located in the city center. This street was heavily trafficked and filled with numerous vendors, from small sales booths to people strapped with different goods to their bodies that were for sale. On day three of my stay, I met an American NGO worker eating soup at one of these street vendors' makeshift booths. She got me in touch with a local Port-au-Princian cab driver that introduced me to a family who lived in a neighborhood approximately 3

[17] Hotel rates for rooms that would have been placed in the *low budget* genre by international hotel standards started at $US50. Usually these did not include Wi-Fi.
[18] The French word for street.

kilometers from Rue Capois. Nine days later I in with them where I would spend the next weeks living with this local family of seven, consisting of, a father, mother, son, and daughter, a grandmother, an aunt and her son. This place would remain a go-to-point for the entire duration of my fieldwork although I did not stay here more than six weeks altogether.

Rue Capois, was located next to *Champs de Mars*, a popular set of recreational parks that housed statues of important leaders during Haiti's early days of formation. This is also where the site for the Presidential palace was, which was unfortunately completely destroyed in the 2010 Earthquake, leaving only an empty site. Nevertheless, *Champs de Mars* was still a go-to place for tourists. On day three I took a left down Rue Capois to Rue Legitime, where the offices of the Ministry of Tourism was located and got an overview of Haiti's tourism. The next day I did an interview with one of Port-au-Prince's long-lasting tour operators, *Voyage Lumière* (VL), who has been in the business for the past 17 years.[19] Together with the owner and main guide Jacqualine Labrom, known as *Jacqui,* I documented my first tour with her a week later. From here on, I used the social networks that the relatively intimate environment Haitian tourism consisted of, and centered on three companies that I followed extensively while adding comparative research through investigating other local business actors located in all four sites. In the *Sud-Est* I rented a room in the small community of *Kabik,* located less than 20 kilometers southeast from Jacmel. From here on I made contact with *Hotel Florita,* located in Jacmel and owned by an American named Joe Cross. In the North I made contact with *Lakou Lakay,* a culture center were social entrepreneur and owner *Maurice Etienne* provided visitors with guided tours of Milot's famous early 19th century Sans Souci Palace and Citadel.[20]. In Jacqui's words The Citadel was Haiti's "greatest attraction". Located about 8 kilometers uphill from Milot it housed a spectacular view. Throughout this thesis I will introduce these informants more thoroughly as I present my findings.

[19] As of May 2015.
[20] The name of the national park that house these historical structures is: *Parc Nationale Historique:* The National Historic Park.

Outline of thesis chapters

In thesis I want to understand: how can a *contested space* become a *tourist space*? I explore this by looking at how *spacemakers* create their concepts of Haiti. By *spacemakers* I mean how actors, be it visitors to the country, business owners working in tourism, or people employed in the Ministry of Tourism, create spatial categories of Haiti, through their different views on Haiti.

In Chapter 2, I deal with the history of Haiti and the periods in the 20th century when there was more tourism in the country. Here, I merge historical references with a visit to a historical hotel in Port-au-Prince. As we get further into the chapter, data from my visit to the Ministry of Tourism will give insight into some of the plans for Haiti's future tourism. In Chapter 3, I give an insight into the use of the words *blan* and nèg. I have chosen to tie the use of the words up to a historical analysis as it seems the most fruitful given the words use in today's context. This analysis goes over to a *race* and *class* argumentation, further dismissing any notion that the uses of *blan* and *nèg* are purely racial. Finally, Chapter 3 shows how a traveler can find himself in a space where the use of *blan* is limited to non-existent, further accentuating a positive experience of Haiti. Chapter 4 aims to describe the visitors' experience of traveling in a *contested space*, and show how opinions can vary depending on where a visitor has been in Haiti. This is exemplified in ethnography that separates tourists that have been able to move around more freely in the country as opposed to those who have remained more restricted. This distinction is made clear when comparing those tourists who remain inside a spatial enclave separating them from the rest of Haitian society. From this example, the question is asked: can we also talk of *impression enclaves* in regards to only seeing a very restricted portion of Haiti? Furthermore, the different backgrounds that people have and their motivations for coming to Haiti can be viewed as different *spatial categories* that may have an impact on how these visitors experience Haiti differently. A discussion on how Haiti can be viewed differently from person to person is discussed further in Chapter 5. Here, I show in practice what the Ministry of Tourism's *open space policy* can play out in the sense of making incentives for tourists to come and experience Haiti. By referring to Roy Wagner (1981) and *the invention of culture*,

the spatial analysis in this chapter deals with how our experiences, especially in cultures foreign to our own, can be said to be created by ourselves, and are not simply "discovered". I explore an *open space,* in the case of Hotel Florita, where tourists can move around freely, and explore parts of Haitian culture. I also show the ministry's own development of what can be characterized a "tourist zone". Furthermore, I continue the discussion from Chapter 4, suggesting that some of the stories that visitors in Haiti describe are not rooted in actual experiences but build on previous misconceptions of Haiti, exemplified in this case in Vodou. In order not to create a utopia consisting only of Haiti's positive features I also show a less positive story from a visitor who ventured out into Haiti uncritically. As the thesis reaches an end in Chapter 6, I attempt to summarize the discussions by pointing out how all parties, from visitors, to the Ministry of Tourism, and small-scale businesses involved in tourism, are *spacemakers.* By this I mean that they create the spatial categories that represent different images of Haiti. As the tourism industry is dependent on positive images circulating concerning the Haitian tourist space, I make a suggestion as to how Haiti's positive sides can be presented in order to help the Ministry of Tourism succeed in their plan to reinstate Haiti on the world tourist map.

2. Champs de Mars, Port-au-Prince, near Rue Capois. On weeknights the local roller skating crew gathers to practice tricks.

2| A history of violence, a future for visitors

In this chapter I want to bring forth a historical understanding of Haiti. I will do so by first mentioning Haiti's colonial history, and then secondly, connect the country's history with tourism to a tendency of political instability. Here, I show traces of Haiti's glory days of tourism visible in my ethnography. Thirdly, I will contextualize the issue of security in Haiti, and how there is a *perception of* danger that does not necessarily correspond actual experiences. As I highlighted in the introduction, Haiti has quite a low rate of violent crime and homicides compared to other countries in the Caribbean. Fourthly, I will supply a perspective from the Ministry of Tourism that shows their vision for Haitian tourism.

A colonial past

Haiti as a *contested space* can in many ways be dated back to its colonial epoch. In 1492 Christophe Columbus arrived on an island that quickly became known as Hispaniola (little Spain) and fell under Spanish rule. Ever since then, violence has played a role in shaping the Haiti of today. The Spanish enchained the native population of the Taíno, and condemned them to a life in bondage searching for gold. Within two generations they were completely wiped out. As a following, the Spanish started importing human beings from West Africa, in early 1500s, as a solution to the lost Taíno labor. They began cutting down trees and vegetation to make room for plantations. Today, the tree cutting practices survives, in order to make coal for cooking food on, a cheaper alternative to the unstable electricity supply. One third of the island was ceded to France in 1697, under the *Treaty of Ryswick,* and was given the name *Saint-Domingue* by the French colonial powers (Sepinwall 2013,12-15). The colonial administrators increased the import of slaves and their extremely brutal exploitation aimed at maximizing profits, subsequently making *Saint-Domingue* France's richest colony (James 2001 [1938]).

In 1789 the French revolution swept across the homeland, brining with it new ideas such as *brotherhood, freedom,* and *equality.* In the same year 450,000 lived as slaves in *Saint-Domingue* in contrast to 55,000 free citizens (Dubois 2013, 19). The ideas of the French revolution spread to the colonies and inspired the slaves in *Saint-*

Domingue particularly. In 1791 the slaves outnumbered their rulers 10:1. Following a Vodou ritual that took place at *Bois Caïman* on August 14, riots broke out in Cap-Français (present day Cap-Haïtien). The Haitian Revolution had started and quickly the iconic figure of Toussaint Louverture became its leader. France dispersed ten thousands of soldiers in attempt to stop the revolution. When Napoleon's power in France increased following the turn of the century, he wanted to reinstate slavery in *Saint*-Domingue and sent 20,000 elite troops to reclaim power (James 2001 [1938], 223). He failed. In 1804, after 13 long years, it was finally over. The revolution had claimed more than 200,000 casualties (James 2001 [1938]).[21] The former colonial masters were banished from the land (Dubois og Garrigus 2006, 192-193). The ex-colony became a republic and was given the name, Haiti. Meaning "land of mountains" it had been the Taíno's original name for their homeland (Dubois 2013, 18).

Following the revolution, French remained the legal language of Haiti, serving the bureaucracy and the ruling elites. Creole was and remained the language that all Haitians came to know. Largely based on French, it is the result of former slaves learning the language of their masters and mixing it with various West-African languages where the slaves originated from, with traces of Spanish, Portuguese and Taíno found in the language as well. Because many of the words were derived from the colonial masters, many informants referred to Creole as "a guessing language". A recent controversial president of Haiti, Jean-Bertrand Aristide,[22] has been responsible for lifting the recognition of Creole, and ensured that state communication was issued in Creole in addition to French. This rendered those Haitians who had a poor knowledge of French, especially written, with an opportunity to follow communication from the state. Turk, an informant running an Internet café in Port-au-Prince, described the division between Creole and French in Haiti. He told me that every Haitian knows French, even if they do not write it they know it. As I came in and out of this café frequently I spoke further with Turk on the subject. What he meant was, because every Haitian had learned French in school, in addition to the similarity in vocabulary to many Creole words, every Haitian could understand French to a certain level.

[21] Here I take into account other colonial powers, Britain and Spain, who also fought in the conflict over rights to *Saint-Domingue*.
[22] I return to him and his state leadership later in this chapter.

Today the Haiti is organized as a Republic, with senators serving constituents in ten different provinces: *Sud-Est, Sud, Grand'Anse, Nippes, Ouest, Centre, Artibonite, Nord-Ouest, Nord* and *Nord-Est*. Following Aristides departure in 2004, there has been two consecutive democratically elected Presidents: Préval, followed by Martelly who is currently in office.

Anthropologist Christian Krohn-Hansen (2001) has described the period after the Haitian revolution when Haiti ruled the entire island of Hispaniola from 1822-1844, under the name of Saint Domingue. Originally the Dominican Republic had claimed its independence from Spain in 1821. However, at the time, Haiti was the strongest of the two nations, economically, military and demographically. The 22 year long rule saw its end when the Dominicans beat back the Haitians forming the Dominican Republic in 1844. However, the Dominicans had to repeatedly fight off the Haitians far into the 1850s in order to stay independent (Krohn-Hansen 2001, 81). Ever since this, tension between the two countries has existed. The Dominican dictator Trujillo's 1937 massacre of an estimated 4000 to 25.000[23] Haitian migrant workers (Krohn-Hansen, 2001, 80) is a terrible example of how the Dominican Republic has sought to regulate Haitian presence within the country. Recently a Dominican court ordering stripped thousands of Haitians of their right to live in the Dominican Republic despite having been born there (Planas 2015). At the time of my visit, many Haitians sought to obtain the three-month visa that cost $US200, in order to gain access to the Dominican Republic, hoping it would provided them with better job opportunities.

The current situation in Haiti can be summarized, as one of difficulty in obtaining a level of development that can support basic needs of the majority of the population. This can be ascribed to two main problems. One is political instability, as I will come to discuss in this chapter, Haiti has had to deal with problems linked to the instability of governments and the fair distribution of

[23] The author displays the scholarly disagreement on how many were actually killed in the massacre. He further displays how it is difficult to find an exact motivation for the killings as they were done rather impulsive using machetes (Krohn-Hansen 2001, 75-130).

wealth. Secondly, there has been a disagreement, politically on what should form Haiti's main income, and by what medium this should be attained. In the 20th century, tourism was sought out as the economic base for Haiti.

The road to tourism

During the late 1940s, Haiti experienced economic stability that led to a boom in tourism. It became *the place to be*. Hotels, restaurants and bars enjoyed frequent guests and visitors could relax in beautiful surroundings with rich cultural influences that had a marked difference to that of the other Caribbean states. The boom unfolded predominantly from 1950-57 (Diederich 2008, Séraphin 2014, 28-36), and came to an abrupt end when the terrors of the Duvalier regime appeared to be the signs of a dictatorship that would last for 29 years. The former doctor François Duvalier, also known as "Papa Doc"[24] was darker in skin tone than many of the former presidents. Papa Doc sought to promote "noirisme",[25] the distinct politics emphasizing black identity and black rights of Haiti's majority black population. Traditionally this group has been of lower social and economic strata than the lighter skinned "mulattoes" (Garrigus 2006, Nicholls 1996, 1-9, 209-242). His use of paramilitary forces, *Tontons Macoutes*, to keep himself in power further contributed to scaring tourist away as his violent authoritative rule became known abroad (Sepinwall 2013, 228, Plummer 1992, 130-138). Thousands of Haitians endured abductions, torture, and imprisonment for years. Thousands were also murdered (Bellegard- Smith 2013, 273-284).

Before succumbing to heart related disease in 1971 François Duvalier had already ensured that his son, Jean-Claude Duvalier, would take over the family regime. By then, the terror of the Duvalier regime had become intricate part of governing. Aged 19, with a round childlike face his son instantly gained the name "Baby Doc". With the dawn of "Jean-Claudisme" the tourism industry actually rose slightly again in the late 1970s and early 1980s (Nicholls 1986, Séraphin 2014, 28-36). Haiti briefly remerged as *the place to be*, hosting celebrities such as

[24] A nickname he was said to have earned during a pandemic of yaws disease in the 1940s, where François Duvalier played a key-role in administrating the treatment of penicillin to the victims, thanks to medical means provided by the U.S. (Girard 2010, 98-100).
[25] Derived from the French word for black, *noir.*

Mick Jagger of the Rolling Stones (Séraphin 2014, 40), and future President of the United States Bill Clinton, on his honeymoon with his wife Hillary in 1975 (Rucker 2010). Duvalier Junior secured Haitians some employment through allowing American garment and baseball factories offering jobs to establish in the country.[26] However, the boom was short-lived as the country slipped into economic turmoil through Duvalier Junior's failed attempt at introducing economic liberalism on a widespread scale. The regime was too corrupt and too uneducated in economic reform, turning into political unrest in the 1980s following a series of events that caused even the most profound believers in the Duvalier regime to have their doubts (Nicholls 1986, Bellegard-Smith 2013).[27]

In the 1980s, Haiti's poor infrastructure saw its people suffer largely from a new disease that would later be called *Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS)* resulting from the spread of the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV). Many outside Haiti thought the virus came from there. Though studies notably by Paul Farmer, have shown that the disease did not originate from the country but came there through the networks of global travel (Farmer 2004), several Haitians still talk of this stigma as a problem even today. Nevertheless, Haiti has been the hardest struck outside of the African continent, with the rate of people infected by HIV estimated to be 2,2%. However, HIV-infection rates have been declining steadily since the 1990s, when they were was at an alarming 9%(Rouzier and Marie-Marcelle Deschamps 2014, UNAIDS 2014).

Tourism disintegrates

Baby Doc went into exile in France in 1986. Riots and frequent transitions from democratically elected governments to military regimes soon followed (Sepinwall 2013) and did not prove to be a better breeding ground for the tourism industry (Séraphin 2014). The 1990s were troubled by political instability and violence. Under such conditions, few industries that rely on

[26] Frequently termed as "sweat shops".
[27] When Jean-Claude married Michèle Bennett, a member of the mulatto class of Haiti, her wealth and light skin tone made even the strongest believers in Papa Doc's "noirisme" have their doubts (Nichols 1986, Bellegard-Smith 2013).

tourists can survive. Only enclave industries have the ability to do so. The *Royal Caribbean Cruise Line* can be described as such an industry.

William was an informant who had worked as a ground crew for the cruise liner since the 1980s, and remembered the Duvalier era well. During the 1980s Haiti's currency valued HTG5 to US$1. Due to this, William could not help but reminisce about the Duvalier times. Following Baby Doc*'s* departure, the political instability made the American garment and baseball factories leave as well. The Haitian currency lost a lot of its value and many Haitians lost their jobs. This saw the Haitian job market becoming even more pressed.

Because the Royal Caribbean Cruise is a Norwegian/American company, William had met many Norwegians and knew that Norwegians could pay well. However, following the decline in job opportunities, even more Haitians now competed for the same jobs. This prompted William to say: "Norwegians work for money! Haitians work for rice", this signified how many Haitians were so desperate that they would work for anything. This was a common problem amongst Haitians, few people could complain or ask for more money in a low-paying job. They knew that if they did 10 more would be ready to take their place. William described to me how he viewed the first democratically elected President, Jean-Bertrand Aristide, since Papa Doc. "The first time it was good". He told me people were happy and they felt more secure from the *state terror* lead by the Duvaliers. However, Aristide was forced into exile his first year in office, following a *coup d'état* in 1991. He was returned to office with the help of U.S. troops to serve out the remainder of his term from 1994-1996 (Fatton 2013).

Although the latter period of his first term was deemed more controversial, many Haitians like William, remember Aristide's first term positively. From 2001-2004 he was reelected and served as President again until forced into another exile, following uprisings that soon spread nationally. Like many other of his fellow countrymen, William viewed this period as not as good. "[W]hen he came back he was the Devil". William referred to many crimes linked to Aristide's rule. Particularly his mistrust in other politicians made him arm the

poor and use them to violently enforce what he could not do through politics. Their use of machetes bore similarity to Papa Doc's *Tonton Macoutes.* Like the revolution of 1791, the uprisings in 2004 also started in the North. An informant from the North described to me what happened when the rebels freed the prisoners from the Cap-Haïtien penitentiary who then proceeded to storm and rob parts of the city. A group of escaped prisoners burst into my informants place and pointed a gun straight to my informant's face pressing for money. The violence then spread to the capital and other parts of the country. The UN Security Council responded by sending more than 7000 peacekeepers to stabilize the situation and help stage new democratic elections (United Nations Security Council 2004).[28] This period of civil unrest saw an increase in violence around the country, particularly in Port-au-Prince. For the tourism industry, this period was catastrophic. However this is marked periods of violence and unrest that do not reflect the everyday situation in the country.

Danish filmmaker, writer, and poet Jørgen Leth, has had a longtime fascination with Haiti. He first visited the country in the early 1980s and has since lived in the country for long periods. I met him when he was currently residing in *Cormier Plage*, a resort I get back to in the section below, alternating between Haiti and his native home Denmark. He was convinced that Haiti could offer a lot to tourist who wanted to come and experience something truly unique. "Haiti har en sjæl og en historie som ingen andre land her [i Caribien] kan måle sig med": "Haiti has a spirit and a history no other country here [in the Caribbean] can compete with". However, as for the strict security warnings he was not pleased. "Det er helt hul i hovedet med de advarsler…" A Danish expression that renders difficult to translate, he was clear that they made no sense, further adding that such warnings were damaging to the travel industry of Haiti. Haitians were to him "venligheden selv": "kindness itself", and he did not think the warnings reflected the situation in the country at all.

[28] As of August 2014, the strength remains at 7424 troops and police (United Nations 2014).

Contemporary security

Events such as those described above give a brief insight into the instability that followed the fall of the Duvalier regime. Although the terrors of the Duvaliers remain horrific in their own nature, there is nevertheless a beneficial side effect to the authoritative nature of the regime. Unless one was sees as an opponent of the Duvalier-regime, the country remained quite safe during their time in office (Bellegard-Smith 2013). The state kept a monopoly on violence, and no one else dared to commit any acts that might render him or her subjects of the *Tonton Macoutes,* Papa Doc's infamous terror squad. Tour operator and owner of Voyage Lumière, Jacquiline Labrom (Jacqui), put it into perspective for me. She stated that the first time she came to Haiti in the Baby Doc era she was "just a little girl" and "could walk around the streets safely". In those days the roads were free from garbage, Champs de Mars was clean and the fountains had water in them.

At my local residency with the family of seven, the grandmother of the household, simply called *Grann,*[29] further helped me generate an understanding of the security difference before and after the Duvaliers. When I asked her if she remembered those days she told me, *"Ah. Oui. Je connais les Duvaliers vraiment bien":* "Oh. Yes. I know the Duvaliers very well"*. "Il y a eu plus de sécurité":* "There was more security"*.* I was intrigued to hear *Grann* share some of the same things that *Jacqui* did, without them ever having met or known each other.

Jean Bernard Simonnet owned *Cormier Plage*, a beachfront hotel located on the road to Labadee cruise ship port. During my visit there he gave me his insights into Haiti's security issues; a topic that was popular amongst foreigners who came to Haiti. However, the negative discourse that Haiti received in the media was not contextualized with the fact that it was far less violent than other Caribbean states. He mentioned death rates in Haiti at "five violent deaths per 100,000 people" contra "25 per 100,000 people" in the Dominican Republic and "32 per 100,000 in Jamaica". Monsieur Simonnet explained why Haiti received the bad press. "The reason is because the effective [ness] of the police is still

[29] *Grann* is the Creole word for Grandmother.

low", then, correcting himself: "the response level is still low". He explained how poor infrastructure and the scarcity of good roads add to the bad press and the security evaluation that Haiti is struggling with. Most notably, Monsieur Simonnet focused on poor hospital development as one of the biggest infrastructural challenges. This had lead him to have an arrangement that could fly his clients to the Dominican Republic via a medical helicopter service also located in the Dominican Republic, where hospitals were of a better standard.

Strengthening security

The low response rate of the Police National Haïtien (PNH), Haiti's national police force is currently being addressed. Not only has the UN's security force, MINUSTAH,[30] contributed to the training of new PNH recruits (MINUSTAH 2015), the Martelly government has also prioritized the training of new police officers. This has elevated the force to 12.000 police agents at the start of 2015 (Haiti Libre 2015). Aristide disbanded the army in 1995 (Bernat 1999), and despite Martelly's quest for reestablishing the army this has not been accomplished.[31] During my stay with the family where I lived in Port-au-Prince, *Dieter* got accepted into the police academy. He was the cousin to the two other children living in the household with their mom and dad. Not only was it great having a family member, who could help them financially, but also having a connection in the police force would mean an increased level of security for the family, or at least this was the belief. Dieter's acceptance into the Port-au-Prince police academy included residency at the academy along with daily meals. This meant that for the family there was one less mouth to feed. His first cadet training would last for six months before he would start patrolling along with the senior officers in the streets.

Plans for tourism

The Ministry of Tourism has great plans for the development of Haitian tourism industry. The relative political stability that has followed since the Aristide

[30] *Mission des Nations Unies pour la stabilisation en Haïti*: United Nations stabilization mission in Haiti.

[31] It is also debatable whether or not it is useful. Economics professor Mats Lundahl (2013, 311-314) have pointed to other developing nations, such as Costa Rica, who are able to spend money in other sectors by not having a national army.

presidency, has allowed for the Ministry of Tourism to plan further ahead in order to develop the tourist industry. I met with the ministry the first week of my fieldwork. I needed statistics to map out how many visitors had passed through the country since second departure of Aristide in 2004.

As I walked down *Rue Capois,* on the way to the meeting, I felt the drops of sweat forming on my forehead as the sun sat high on the sky another hot afternoon in Port-au-Prince. The offices of the Ministry of Tourism were located just behind *Champs de Mars*. On the way there, people succeeded in yelling "*blan, blan!*" at me more times than I could count. I return to a discussion on the words meaning and significance in the next chapter. The ministry was located on *Rue Lamitiere* in a tan, square three-story building, where the area in front of the gates sported their colorful logo, a red hibiscus flower. Further down the street I spotted a car wreck and some of the local street kids playing around it. When I arrived at the ministry and stated my business at the reception I was taken straight up to the accounting and statistics department in the ministry. Here, the people were very helpful and provided me with a table showing the number of visitors from 2002-2007. The statistics lacked the most recent years, but they were hoping they would be available soon.[32] They concluded with the facts that infrastructure was a challenge, however, plans were in the making to improve this. During my many trips from Cap-Haïtien to Port-au-Prince and vice versa, I saw roads being built. This was one sign of the improvements to the infrastructure. They left me with a document that I had been allowed to look at while seated in the egg-white room. The report was colorful, filled with pictures and written in English, and read: "HAÏTI IS OPEN FOR BUSINESS… TOURISM LEADS THE WAY!", and proved a great insight into some of their strategy for developing the tourism industry.

The document showed several pictures of the different regions where tourism is welcomed; *North Coast (*Cap-Haïtien to Fort-Liberté, includes the inland village of Milot, where the historic attractions Sans Souci Palace and the Citadel are located), *Arcadins Coast* (south of Gonaïves, stretching far beyond Saint-Marc and

[32] As discussed previously, recent statistics show a 21,1 percent increase in tourism in 2014, from the following year (Caribbean Journal staff 2014).

ending right between Arcahaie and Cabaret),[33] finally there is the *Caribbean Coast* (stretching from Marigot, encompassing Jacmel and extending up past Les Cayes around the region of Port-à-Piment). These regions are visible in appendix B. Of the three I would say Arcadins coast is the least developed area. The report shows this by the lack of hotel rooms available in the area. However, if one takes a bus which pass along this coast, which I did many times, you will see that there are vast areas of land not developed. Rather, it has simply been purchased, with a makeshift wall built around it. Sometimes these areas of undeveloped land are given names such as *Obama Beach,* perhaps to show that one day its owners may aspire to develop the land into something more. William had told me, "they're waiting", explaining that these purchases were often the results of Haitian diaspora. They know the land is valuable, and some have owned it for several years. However, they have not yet sought to develop it. William explained, this was said to be due to the instability that had previously existed in Haiti. However, the owners are well aware of the lands potential, William emphasized, as property prices have soared over the recent years. This is not surprising. Although, Haiti's golden age of tourism (Clammer 2012, 50, Plummer 1989) may now seem in the distant compared to present day Haiti, it is still fresh in the minds of some.

Grann who was part of the Port-au-Prince residence where I lived remembered the 1970s, the days when more foreigners, *blans,* as she and her son in law-called them were more frequently in the country. She had also been to the USA and visited her other daughter[34]. I was not as "exotic" for *Grann,* as I seemed to be for many of the other people in the neighborhood who were younger than her.

An extract from the heyday of tourism

While documenting a tour in Port-au-Prince with owner and tour operator *Jacqui* of *Voyage Lumière*, our final stop was the famous Hotel Oloffson, immortalized in Graham Greene's novel "The Comedians" (Greene 1966). I return to this tour in Chapter 3. The hotel was in true Gingerbread fashion, an architectural style

[33] Formerly known as *Duvalierville* during the Papa Doc era.
[34] I knew she had at least two daughters; the other one lived together with *Grann* with her family in the household of seven people.

developed by three Haitian architects in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, who had been schooled in France. When returning to Port-au-Prince they introduced the particular style to several upper class families who sought to own mansions. Made out of a mix of brick and wood or just wood, the houses are known for large porches, pointy roofs often covered in metal, and distinct wooden carvings or wrought metal designs. Hotel Oloffson had originally been a large mansion, built in 1887, which had later seen more sections of the gingerbread styled architecture added to make room for more guests as it turned into a hotel in 1935. It was an impressive structure, although as one informant said: "it could do with a lick of paint". This person was referring to the hotel's need to be renovated; everything from changing indoor floorboards to outdoor planks as some of them were rotting, was necessary. With only one client on the tour, we had sat down for drinks on the porch. However, Sean, the client, asked Jacqui if he could have a look around and then wandered off.

Having heard a rumor that Mick Jagger used to stay in the hotel in the 1970s I had a look around and asked the barmaid inside if we could go see the suites. Sean was close by. She welcomed me to do so, pointing out that "yes, upstairs you will find the Mick Jagger suite, tout [everything]", smiling to me as I went upstairs. Sean had already gone ahead. As I crossed over the an arch-like walkway, the thick dark floorboards let out a loud creaking sound as I carefully stepped on them and headed out the open white door that took me to an old porch. Here I found the suites, added to the original mansion when it became a hotel. I walked into one of them. Looking like an old patient room in hospital, it was equipped with a double bed, a nightstand with an old 1930s lamp on it. Located at the far end of the oblong room, was a two-foot elevated step that led into the bathroom, complete with an old 1920s styled lavatory and bathtub. As I headed back out again I spotted a small sign on the surprisingly small door of the deep room. It read, *Mick Jagger*. On the other suites there were several other celebrity names that stuck out, former first-lady *Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis,* Hollywood actress *Ann Margaret* and *Graham Greene* himself. We walked back in and Sean was thrilled by the architecture of the place, stating that he "knows just so many bohemian type of New Yorkers that would just love the place". He

smiled as he added, that the "cracks", "creaking" and "condition" of the hotel, would simply charm these types of people. In essence, Hotel Oloffson can be viewed as figurehead of Haitian tourism from an era in which it bloomed. However today, other than the name signs noting that some famous people had once lived in the Hotel Oloffson suites, there were few indications left in the country that showed how Haiti was once a thriving tourist destination Hugues Séraphin recent book[35] on Haiti's tourism states the same, noting that most of the known hotels from Haiti's heyday of tourism are gone (Séraphin 2014, 40-43).

Working class tourists

Although tourism in Haiti has gone through periods in time of near dormancy this does not mean that the country stopped all kinds of tourist activities. This is visible in the existence of *beach clubs.* Drawing on Smith's (1989) description of a tourist as someone who seeks change, I have provided an account from a trip I did with my host family to a *beach club* located outside Port-au-Prince.

One Saturday afternoon I took the father and his son of my host family out of Port-au-Prince. I knew they had really wanted to see the sea and experience it away from the city. Yves was 14 years old and had never been to the sea and did not know how to swim, neither did Victor, his father. Although it was possible for them to go down to the port of the capital, it was highly polluted and was known to include some bad neighborhoods. Buildings on *Boulevard Jean-Jacques Dessalines,* nicknamed *Grand Rue*: Main Street*,* had been badly damaged in the 2010 earthquake. Further west, towards the port, it looked worse. The Boulevard had been the *Rue de Commerce:* commercial street*,* before the earthquake, filled with various boutiques and commercial enterprises. Now, many shop owners had moved to Pétionville, the "Beverly Hills" of the province *Ouest,*[36] located southeast approximately 8 kilometers from *Grand Rue* in Port-au-Prince*.* Those who could not afford to move still conducted business from the crumbled buildings on the *Grand Rue*. To get to the beach, we took a *taptap* from

[35] Le Tourisme: l'ouverture pour le peuple de Toussaint?
[36] The French word for *East*.

home down towards one of the *taptap* stops behind the *Grand Cemetery.*[37]From here we got on a makeshift bus made out of a truck. The driver wanted 200 gourdes[38] for all three of us to sit up front with him. It was only 25 gourdes more than the price Victor had estimated, 175 gourdes,[39] for all of us. Yves was very eager to sit up front, and if 25 gourdes extra allowed for the comfort of all three I thought "why not". We drove past Carrefour (a town about 15 km west of Port-au-Prince) via *Route Nationale 2* towards a *beach club.* Victor knew exactly where we were going.

When we got off the bus, I paid 750 gourdes for all three of us to enter the club. This included access to the facilities, which in this case also included a basketball court with a ball, but most importantly the ocean. I learned that beach clubs are still popular attractions in Haiti and have continued to exist since the American occupation in 1915-1934. They enjoyed increased popularity in the tourism boom during the 1950s and the 1970s and up until the early 1980s (Théodat 2004). Here, members of the Haitian middle class come to enjoy the facilities the beach club has to offer. Beach clubs will often offer showers and bathroom facilities of varying quality, beach chairs and tables, parasols, and a bar that sells various drinks, beverages and snacks. It might also include some sort of activity arena, such as a basketball court. Whatever the options are, the beach club will always feature access to the beach or waterfront located away from the city area or industrial or *zone de le déchet:* waste zone. Garbage management proves a problem in many parts of Haiti. In Port-au-Prince the government waste disposal service, named SCMS, often fails to live up to its designated task. Often piles of garbage mixed with dirt and mud polluted the streets of Port-au-Prince. Jacmel had the same problem, but of the two, Port-au-Prince suffered the worst concentration of waste. Especially outside the capital, where one could see piles of garbage stacked up in waste zones that were surrounded by cement block walls. Here, the waste was often burnt, exposing hazardous toxins in the air as

[37] *Le Grand Cimetière: The Grand Cemetery*, final resting place to many of the deceased after the 2010 Earthquake.
[38] 200 Haitian Gourdes equaled about $US4.5 at the time.
[39] My informant Ancy-Robert (Hann-see), residing in Carrefour, gave me a similar listing of bus prices to or from Port-au-Prince. His estimates were slightly less, but then again our distance was slightly longer than Carrefour.

the burning plastic exudes smoke. Cap-Haïtien was a stark opposite to the two cities, renowned for having some of the cleanest streets in the country, due to the presence of a functioning waste disposal service (Clammer 2012, 177).

What separates a beach club from a beachfront hotel is their lack of accommodation. On waterfront hotels it is also more common to also find foreigners who come to enjoy a day off, such as UN-soldiers, NGO workers and on a rare occasion the ordinary tourist. Although, there are different types of beach clubs, the clientele in a typical beach club, were normally Haitian. This was because beach clubs did not offer accommodation. For foreigners, the norm seemed to be beachfront hotels, even if they only stayed for the day. This seemed to be connected to class. In beachfront hotels one would also find Haitians but never did I see foreigners at beach clubs, which catered to Haitian middle class, often earning less than most foreigners in the country.

Victor and Yves visit to the beach club was a joyous event, one they both spoke warmly of on several occasions subsequently. Their visit can also be viewed as a desire to consume, through experience, a behavior whereby leisure time is enjoyed profoundly. Currently reserved for Port-au-Prince's middle class. However, this is a topic for another discussion. Certainly there exists a positive social sanction in Haiti for having leisure time and foreigners are often met with many questions of where they have traveled. Victor was prevented by not possessing a discretionary income that allowed him to provide his family with much travel opportunities. However that day, due to my financial help Victor and Yves became working class tourists. The difference between Victor and his son compared to the rest of the beach club goers was astonishing. Well-defined in both muscle and physique Victor and his Yves were had no extra body fat as a result from the tough labor their living situation committed them to. The other males representing the middle class were fat, and I saw little muscle except for two who seemed to visit the gym. Still, they had more body fat and their muscles were less toned compared to Victor and his son. The belief by many small-scale business owners were that the middle class had contributed to keeping the tourist industry alive in the country when there had been few visits from abroad.

The middle class had a discretionary income that they were able to spend not only in beach clubs, but also in established hotel bars such as Hotel Florita, a location we meet again in Chapter 5.

One thing my visit to the beach club shows is that being a tourist in one's own country is in fact not only possible in Haiti, but also a trend. In beach clubs,[40] Haitian middle class were frequent visitors, with those who could afford it going several times in a month. Others, who could not, would save up to be able to enjoy such an event. Beach clubs are important to take into account. They show that although Haiti's international tourism had gone back and forth in its development, and even laid nearly dormant for the most dramatic *coup d'état* period of the 1990s (Séraphin 2014), local, inland tourism has not. These structures have been maintained to accommodate Haitians who live in the country. In that sense, it shows Haiti's potential to receive more tourists. Contrary to foreign belief the industry has never fully disintegrate, but has survived through the middle-class' use of beach clubs. As I realized, beach clubs was not the only tourist establishments used by Haitian middle class. Hotels, restaurants, were also used, and Haitians mingled in many of the same resorts foreigners did.

Stigma and visitors

One day I met some guests at a beachfront hotel in *Province du Nord.*[41] Sophie, Isabella, Cindy, and Beth, lay stretched out on beach chairs taking in the sun while small waves crashed on the beach. They were a group of four girls, in their early twenties, who were volunteer workers for a missionary building a church in the inland town of Hinche also located in the same province. The town was known for attracting lots of missionary workers. When I met the girls they had finished their work and were spending their remaining days at the beachfront resort. Having spent a total number of ten days in Haiti, where seven of them were working days in Hinche, this was their last day before going home.

[40] I went to other beach clubs as well but chose this part of my ethnography as it gave the best insights through the perspective of class contrasts amongst Haitians.
[41] Northern province.

The girls described the contrast in their living conditions in Hinche in comparison to the beachfront hotel where they were now. The gated community that housed them in Hinche served all their basic housing needs. However, many housing conditions in Haiti struggled with things such as sufficient water pressure in the lavatories and much of the inventory would often come across as old and worn compared to American or Western European standards. The nice beachfront hotel would easily serve as stark contrast. Such facilities had after all had access to more capital when being developed, and had also been developed in order to ensure that more capital would suffice. At some point in the conversation, Cindy asked me about my living quarters. At this point I alternated my quarters between Lakou Lakay in Milot and a low budget hotel in Cap-Haïtien. However, I also told them how up until this point, I had lived with a family in a neighborhood in Port-au-Prince, close to the city center. The facilities were humble but I felt secure there and I had a good connection with the family. As the girls inquired further I revealed that there was no running water, except from the faucet by the gates. This meant there was an outdoor toilet, instead of a flushing one, and that we showered using buckets of water. The girls were more curious as to how I slept and where I ate? I told them I had a small room for myself where there was a bed and that I ate the food the family cooked out of their cutlery. How did we wash it Beth inquired? With cold water and soap, I told her and the group. Beth looked at me and asked starkly, "aren't you afraid of contracting HIV/AIDS?"

Beth's question represents some of the stigma Haiti faces, in this case boiled down to the essence. Although far from the anything I usually heard in the field, the quote represents a reoccurring tale in the field that was the mythos not based on actual experiences but seemed to encompass many of the visitors' storytelling when describing experiences in Haiti.

Summary

In this chapter I have aimed at contextualizing the current situation in the country through a historical context. I have shown how the history of violence started in the early days of Haiti as a colony and has characterized certain epochs

of the country's history, such as the Duvalier years. Even those days are controversial. More senior informants remember informants, Grann, William and Jacqui, are also able to reflect and suggest that despite the terror that the regime was known for, there was perhaps more social order and a stronger economy. Since security issues are a concern amongst foreigners in Haiti I have tried to contextualize them by showing although Haiti has a history of violence, it is not a constant state in the country. By combining historical sources with ethnography I have showed how tourism once thrived in the country, where new travelers find old treasures in Hotel Oloffson. Here we see a glimpse of what a future for tourists might look like through Sean's enthusiastic encounter with Hotel Oloffson. In this section, I also suggest that the remains of the old industry have been kept alive by portions of Haitian middle class. As tourism is once again sought as an economic builder for the country, we learn that as the Haitian tourist space reemerges it still faces stigma; negative imaginaries amongst foreigners, such as those concerning HIV/AIDS, still exists today. I aim to demystify some of the misconceptions of Haiti that visitors express as we get further into the following chapters.

In the next chapter I will supply further accounts from tourist experiences in Haiti and show variation in the discourse between *hosts* and guests by taking as point of departure the local discourse of *nèg* and *blan.* Here, I aim to contextualize the different experiences from the visitors by further exploring where they have been in Haiti, what the purpose of their visit was and if they speak either of the two languages local to Haiti.

3| Race and class in Haiti: *nègs* hosting *blans*

In the previous chapter I discussed Haiti's history, its tourism, contextualized some of security issues linked to an image of Haiti, showed some of the security measures put in place by the government, and some of the future ambitions from the Ministry of Tourism.

In this chapter I will continue the discussion of visitors experiences of Haiti. This time by discussing the concept of *blan,* a word many travelers in Haiti are met by. As the use of the word can further contribute to amplify the differences between *hosts* and *guest,* I aim to contextualize the use of the word further, especially since I have found little data on the subject. By connecting the word's use with class, I will show through my ethnography how the distinction between blan and nèg cannot be said to be color based.

The use of the word blan

As a foreigner *blan* is a word you will get to hear a lot in Haiti. The word *blan* can come across as controversial in itself because it is derived from the French word *blanc,* meaning *white.* However, the derivation is not to be confused with the words signification, which I will argue is rich in meaning and dependent on the context in which it is used. I will start this part of the discussion by introducing the way Jacqui described the meaning of *blan*, and move on to how the word is perceived by hosts, visitors and by academia. As the word is often yelled out at foreigners who pass by I sometimes transcribe the word as *blan!,* to emphasize this exactly.

"It just means foreigner", Jacqui would say when people, including myself, asked about the word. Although, the word also means *white, blank* listed in a *Haitian Creole Dictionary and Phrasebook* (Theodore 2014, 25), referring to the color. However, I claim the use of the word in present day discourse between *hosts* and *guests* cannot be viewed as strictly relating to skin color. I believe has to do with the history of Haiti as a former colony who gained its supremacy as a free nation. I will get back to this in this section as I also discuss the word *nèg*. I interviewed

visitors in Haiti I came across many who had remarked on the usage of the word. Some did not know it significance, as they spoke neither French nor Creole, others often said they did not like it. I once sat down with a group of four American NGO-workers who claimed it was "racist". Another time an American volunteer worker told me he felt it was "objectifying him". Maurice, tour guide operator and owner of *Lakou Lakay* in Milot had more than thirty years in the business. He also said, "it means foreigner". Further pointing out that often Haitians used the word when asking for money "hey, blan gimme one dollah" because they think foreigners are rich.[42]

In the North, Cap-Haïtien made up the second largest city in Haiti; a compact city with a population at just under 200,000 people. Once the colonial powerhouse of the French under the name Cap-Français, it had gridded street patterns, and plenty of old pre and post-colonial architecture. *Cap* or *O'Kap* as it is often referred to, presented beautiful facades that were untouched in the 2010 earthquake.[43] In an interview with local hotel owner in O'Kap I was given further insight on the discourse of *blan*. "People [many Haitians] just don't get the concept of tourism". The owner told me how cab drivers wait in the airport for clients, come up to tourist screaming "blan, blan", offering them cab rides. The hotel owner had gone up to them on several occasions telling them how they scare tourists doing that, further adding that often the tourist will have no understanding of Creole, and thus have no idea what they mean when yelling out *blan!* at newcomers.

Situations such as these seem to encompass part of the challenge that the Haiti faces in order to develop a commercially available tourist industry. I have named this chapter *nègs* hosting *blans*. Nèg is the Haitian word for *guy,* which I learned from the numerous conversations I had with locals in all the regions I visited. Theodore's (2014, 60) dictionary lists the same meaning. In the north they had a

[42] However, Maurice knew that this was often not the case. One could have money to go to Haiti but still not be able to throw around money all the time. In fact, he said he tried to offer a fair service because he knew "this country can bleed you dry".
[43] The last major earthquake that brought destruction to the North was the earthquake of 1842, which also left the Palace of Sans Souci in its present day state as ruins.

saying, *"Ahh, nèg"*, which was used a lot when you said something silly or did something that could be considered stupid. "I found it easily translated to the word "dude" as it was less formal than "*mesye"*, or "*moun",* Creole for *"*man*"*. Furthermore, there were certain phrases in the Creole language that made use of the word *nèg* often when referring to a stranger. At Lakou Lakay, Maurice had a helper, eighteen-year-old Joab, who contributed to everything from preparing food to playing the drums when Maurice had clients. One night there was racket in the streets of Milot. When I asked my friend Joab the next day, what was that noise last night? He simply replied, *"en nèg pa bon"*, which translates to: "a bad/no good fellow". There seems to exist a distinction between *nèg* and *blan* in the discourse that separates *hosts* from *guests*. Why can this be?

Creating the "black republic"

In order to understand Haiti's *blan* and *nèg* discourse, one needs to look at the history of Haiti. As the first free "black republic" in the Western hemisphere, Haiti has not only made its mark on history by defeating their colonists and erasing the former division made up by *race*. As Haiti became and independent republic,[44] it was declared that all its peoples would now be termed as black, regardless if they were "mulattos", offspring from black and white people, or "pure blacks". However, some of Haiti's revolutionary leaders felt that in order to completely separate themselves from their tragic colonial past, many whites, notably soldiers that had survived the revolution were to be executed. Under the command of Haiti's first leader after the independence, Jean-Jacques Dessalines, the order was followed through with extreme forthrightness (Dubois 2013, 42-43).[45]. Furthermore Dessalines made it illegal for all whites to own land in Haiti (Dubois and Garrigus 2006, 192-193). Those who remained in the country now gained the legal status of black.

[44] January 1st 1804.

[45] However, Historian Laurent Dubois has pointed that exempts were made to those who had helped the Haitians during the revolution, including a Polish regiment and other whites that had proved indispensable for the revolution (Dubois 2013, 42-43). The Polish, white, regiments who were spared were given land outside of Port-au-Prince, in Cazale (Clammer 2012, 139) along the Arcadins Coast.

By removing most of the remaining whites after the revolution and declaring that all remaining people would now be known as "black" (Dubois and Garrigus 2006, 192-193), it is perhaps not surprising that the word for guy, fellow, became *nèg*. As I stated earlier, Creole is what many informants called "a guessing language", resulting from former slaves trying to reproduce the words uttered by their owners, and thus, creating their own language. As slaves were called *nègre* in French,[46] and whites became removed from the country following the revolution, it is logic that word *nèg* came to mean the same as person.

Maximillien Laroche is a researcher in literary studies and has also formed the same conclusions towards the word *nèg*. Contrary to the French word *nègre,* a loaded and distinct word, the Creole word *nèg* is general, without color. Often it is referring to men of all colors (Laroche 1980, 284). The newly liberated 19th century Haiti sought to define the word *nèg as both meaning* Haitian citizen and human being (Schiller and Fouron 2001, 103-104). Hence, another way to look at *nèg,* in a historical context, is that Haiti at an early stage removed the former preconceived colonial ideas about racial inferiority. Following the first American occupation,[47] 1915-1934, whites slowly came back into the country and were eventually allowed to own land (Sepinwall 2013, 216). At this time, the US military presence remained racially segregated and was made up largely of whites (Dubois 2013, 226). With this in mind, it is perhaps not surprising that the word for foreigner became *blan,* as many foreigners who came back were white and there were hardly any whites left in the country.[48] It should also be noted that although Creole originated as "a guessing language", it has been allowed to evolve for centuries as an independent language in an independent nation state. Today, Creole is recognized as a completely independent language in Haiti. Thus, words such as *blan*, which have been derived from French, can now be said to have their own independent meaning. Creole is not French, and

[46] *Nègre* is the French word for Negro in English.
[47] An American response to Haiti's weak government, and fear of Haiti's proximity to the U.S. in regards to World War 1 and German influence in the Caribbean (real or imagined). Some of the whites that had settled in Haiti post-revolution were Germans more followed in the years to come. As settlers they gained Haitian citizenship by marrying black Haitian women (Dubois 2013).
[48] Remnants of the Polish descendants blended into the rest of the Haitian population as years went by and became increasingly darker in their skin tone.

thus I argue we should not confuse the meaning of words which bears similarity to French, with the French meaning.

The city tour with Voyage Lumière

We met Sean in the previous at the Hotel Oloffson. This was as the final leg of the tour he was on. Sean was 41. He wanted to experience another country while doing something meaningful, and had gotten in touch with a person in Brooklyn who knew an organization in Haiti working to improve the education of children. This would enable him to see the humanitarian work done on-site. Sean would be involved with their library service. He had bought his own airfare, arranged for his own accommodation until the start of his volunteer work when he would live with a local family in the North, arranged by the organization he was volunteering for. He had brought along with him a kids laptop and a Kindle[49] loaded with books that he was going to give to the library. I introduced Sean briefly, in the previous chapter. In this chapter I continue the ethnography from the same tour where we last met Sean, at Hotel Oloffson. The extract you are about to read is from a set of events that took place before we got to the Oloffson.

The tour that day was a typical one that Jacqui used to do with her clients. It involved picking the client, in this case only one, up at their local accommodation. Jacqui also had big groups she toured as well. From there on she would take them around on a city tour that involved a tour of Port-au-Prince's *Gingerbread houses, Champs de Mars,* a stop at the *Nèg Mawon[50] (the unknown slave) statue* and the *Toussaint Louverture* statue*, the Presidential Palace* and *the cathedral* (both severely damaged in the earthquake, the Palace has been completely removed, leaving only an empty site with only the lawn and fences around it), *Marché de Fer; The Iron Market,* finishing off with drinks at *Hotel Oloffson,[51]* As Jacqui was her own boss, she had the ability to adapt the tours to

[49] Kindle is a digital E-book reading platform made by the company Amazon.
[50] Named in French; Le Nègre Marron, in English; the black Maroon, often referred to as "the unknown slave" (Clammer 2012, 118).
[51] I have included the most reoccurring sites on Jacqui's tours. This particular tour also included other sites such as the commercial district that contained the Natcom and Digicel buildings (service providers for mobile phones), the old barracks were the Duvaliers held political prisoners, and an artist gallery that used to be nearby. Ordinarily a trip to *Musée du Panthéon*

her clients needs. Below I show extracts from three events that took place on this tour with VL.

In the early stages of the tour we had just finished the tour of the Gingerbread houses in upper part of Port-au-Prince, East in the *Bois Verna* area. Thereafter, we moved on to a tour of the park facilities called *Champs de Mars*. As I sat down on the 2-foot flowerbed near the statue of President Alexander Pétion,[52] along with Sean and Jacqui, I noticed a difference. We were three white people in a park where according to my standard observation people of white skin color were normally subjected to comments, shouts, and lots of questions; all with the frequent use of the word *blan*. However, we were able to look at the statue without any interference. Jacqui's presence seemed to be familiar to the people in the park.

Later, on we stopped by the crumbled Cathedral, once the hallmark of Port-au-Prince's Catholic community. Since the earthquake, the area has become a gathering spot for homeless families, and street kids who made makeshift homes in the rubble still present in the area of the Cathedral. Sean exited the car briefly to take pictures of the Cathedral and was approached for by some locals asking for money, "hey, hey you, gimme one dollah". They did not use the word *blan*.

Finally, we arrived at the statue of the unknown slave. After a quick look we drive over to the statue of Toussaint L'Ouverture on the other side where five art dealers who had already spotted us and prepared themselves. By grabbing as many art-pieces as they could, mostly painted canvas, the sellers approached us. Inside the car Jacqui asked Sean, "Do you want to buy any?" He answered uncertainly, "I don't know if they are any good". "You can get them for as low $US10", Jacqui pointed out, and Sean exited with Jacqui serving as translator. He bought two pieces for $US30. Back in the car Sean showed me the canvases. He told me about of his lack of haggling skills, and how these were really "put to the

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National Haïtien: The National Museum would also be included on the tour. However, that day it was closed due to a national holiday.

[52] Pétion was the ruler of Southern Haiti when the nation was divided into to separate regimes. He ruled from 1806 until his death in 1818 (Sepinwall 2013, 104).

test" when he was in Egypt. Jacqui said: "I keep them under control and tell them I won't bring anyone around here if you are not nice to my people". We drove on to the final site, Hotel Oloffson.

Creating a space within the space

When Jacqui says she keep the art dealers under control, she is demonstrating how she makes sure that the material space that the tour takes place in, remain relatively under control. I know this is a conscious effort. Foreigners cannot walk freely in Port-au-Prince without normally being addressed as *blan* and approached by locals for money, whereas Jacqui's clients could.

When the tour finished, Sean was dropped off at his hotel on Rue Capois. From there on we went to a local café I knew, to conduct the interview. Simply walking sixty meters we hear a few people shouting "*blan, blan*" at us. Inside the café Sean reveals: how he "did not feel particularly safe to wander around for myself", before coming to Haiti. However, now that he was in Haiti he said: "I feel a lot more relaxed now that I am here". He claimed that this was his other "big trip" to "a risky country", where he attributed his trip to Egypt in 2011[53] as the other *risky trip*. Sean had purchased travel insurance for this trip, which he had never done before. He had even downloaded a *Haitian Medical Dictionary* for his iPhone. As he took it out to show, it was also revealed that his iPhone was equipped with an *extra battery case* directly attached to the phone, making it bigger yet capable of providing twice the amount of power compared to a regular iPhone. The reason he sided with VL was that the other tour operator he got in touch with, took 1-½ weeks to reply. VL also came up as cited on quite a lot of news reports online on Haitian tourism and to Sean "this was very impressive". Sean had also booked transportation through VL from the airport to *the Plaza Hotel* where he spent his days for the duration of his stay in Port-au-Prince. Jacqui, the owner of VL, had not only responded right away when he got in touch with her, but she had also told him "in detail" where he would find the driver waiting for him at the airport, and what he would look like. This had again made Sean feel much more safe and reassured about using VL and actually going to

[53] After the revolution.

Haiti. As he revealed, “I was apprehensive about going at all, she [Jacqui] actually convinced me to go”. Sean’s initial reluctance about coming was rooted in the negative things he had heard about Haiti in the U.S.; the poverty, the crime, combined with his own “poor knowledge of the local language” which seemed to worry him in regards to how he would move around in the country. However, now that Sean had seen Haiti through Jacqui’s tour he felt “a lot more relaxed”. Regarding Jacqui’s tour, he was particularly fond of the fact that Jacqui took him into the city and was not simply a “mass tour” on a bus where “you cannot hear what the guide is saying”. Sean seemed to appreciate that he could move around in the landscape on Jacqui’s tour. I believe this was also important in the sense that Sean was able to create his own spatial categories of how he viewed Haiti, rather than simply taking as point of departure, his fears, but not being able put them to the test by exploring Haiti.

I claim here that Jacqui has created *a space within the Haitian space* due to her client’s ability to walk around freely and openly in Port-au-Prince. Drawing on anthropologist Arjun Appadurai’s (1990) five *scapes,* one might call this a Haitian *touristscape,* or a *tourist space*. Not only is it a space that harbors something interesting for tourists to see, e.g. Hotel Oloffson. Jacqui’s tourist space is perceived as secure, comfortable, reassuring, for tourists, in this case made exemplified by a visitor that can move around freely and confidently and experience the city without constantly being confronted by locals through the use of *blan* and other remarks. Jacqui had lived in Haiti for 15 years and spoke Creole fluently. This made her able to move around more freely. She knew many of the local customs, prices on goods and more importantly she knew how to behave with Haitians. This was signified on another occasion when Jacqui did a tour with a big group of missionaries a few months after the tour with Sean. We had stepped off the bus and gone to visit the National Museum in Port-au-Prince. When we had finished inside and were returning to the bus a new art-salesman vigorously approached her and the group and addressed Jacqui in English. I say he was new because he approached Jacqui and her group as if he did not know her. She let him know with a smile that she was not interested. He asked rapidly, “Where are you from?” “Oh, I live here” Jacqui answered and uttered some words

in Creole to the driver, telling him where their next stop was. The whole incident seemed to take the art-salesman by surprise. He stood and watched with a confused look on his face as we got on the bus and drove away.

In order to further my claim of Jacqui's *space within a space,* we need to get an understanding of how being a foreigner is experienced in Haiti. I will do so through discussing the meaning and the usage of the word *blan.* Here I would like to preempt that by simply documenting some experiences from visitors, I cannot claim that there is a uniformed experience of being a foreigner in Haiti. However I will argue there are reoccurring tendencies represented in the use of the word *blan.*

***Blan*: a foreigner**

In the book *Fieldwork Identitites in the Caribbean*, Mark Schuller (2010) has written a chapter titled " 'Mister Blan,' Or the Incredible Whiteness of Being (an Anthropologist)". Schuller as a white anthropologist addresses his experiences as a *blan* in Haiti. Schuller starts by characterizing the word as denoting to color, when he first treats the word as simply meaning white, white person (Schuller 2010, 106). The author acknowledges that in Haiti *blan* is also a word used to refer to foreigners (Schuller 2010, 114), however claiming that the use of *blan* "solidify" the ideology that all Haitians are black. Moreover, he claims that by being called *blan* at least five times a day while walking in the streets near Champs de Mars forced his "racial identity" upon him. Racial identity is something Schuller believes whites previously have not reflected on. Furthermore, he writes that it maintains an outsider discourse between the person saying *blan* and the person being called *blan* (Schuller 2010).

I believe Schuller is right in his claim that the term is very much used as a word to address someone who is not Haitian (Schuller 2010, 115). Furthermore, I learned that *blan* is felt by many foreigners as a discourse that widens the gap between *hosts* and *guests.* The word is not only aimed at people with a light skin tone, but is indeed applied to people who have dark skin tone but do not originate from Haiti. Schuller also demonstrates this (Schuller 2010, 115). I

experienced how a foreign black person is called a *blan* in Haiti on one of Maurice's tours one afternoon.

Sans Souci Palace (SSP), built in 1813, was located next to the Cathedral of Milot, built at the same time of the palace. Surrounded by steep mountains covered in vegetation, Milot and the Northern Province had the most trees in Haiti. King Henri the 1st, who oversaw the construction of SSP and the Citadel, also demanded that his minions did not cut down the trees surrounding the Kingdom of the North.[54] The Citadel was located 900 meters above sea level, and was an impressive walk on a tan cobblestone road trough dense jungle, filled with trees with edible foods on them.[55] There was a [first] parking lot at the bottom in the valley, by the Cathedral and Palace; the second one was located up on the mountain, before the last ascent to the Citadel. Together with Maurice I stood waiting by the first parking lot when a large Mercedes minibus pulled up to the lot. 14 people excited, most of them were American students from "Omega University", studying architecture and engineering. Together with their professor they had come to look at these historic structures that had been under the protection of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), since 1982.

As the visitors got off the bus and Maurice greeted them warmly, "welcome!" shaking the hands of Stanley, the teacher, and several of the students. All of the *guests* were white, except one. Christina, a student in her early twenties was Senegal-American and fluent in both French and English. She lived and studied in the U.S, but her parents still lived in Senegal. Maurice gave the tour in English, as this was a language all people on the tour could understand. We began by walking up towards SSP. Immediately vendors and sales people approach them trying to sell hats, necklaces and water. Christina could answer them in French,

[54] From 1811-1820 King Henri the first, a self proclaimed monarch ruled over the Northern parts of the country. Following the revolution dispute over governance led to the temporarily split into two separate Haiti's, the kingdom in the North, and the Republic of Haiti in the South, ruled by President Pétion.

[55] Maurice told me, part of King Henri's strategy to beat of any suspecting new attacks from France wanting to claim back their lost "jewel in the crown", was to plant trees with eatable foods to prepare the Kingdom of the North for a potential guerrilla warfare where the jungle would supply them with food to power their troops.

and let them politely know that she did not wish to buy anything.

3. Sans Souci Palace. An Earthquake in 1842 left a large proportion of the original structure in ruins. However, still, it remains a testimony to one of many great things Haiti's peoples can achieve.

We stopped just before the palace gates and Maurice announced that we would now enter "the Palace of Sans Souci", built by "*Roi*[56] Henri Christophe". "We are kinda on a hike now", Maurice explained as we pass through the gates and walk up the old limestone stairs imbedded in the grass and headed up to the palace main staircase. From here on Maurice walk up four steps and stops. Here, to an attentive crowd he starts telling the story of how the palace used to operate. With guards lighting the wax candles each night to illuminate the palace and symbolize the significance of "a free, black kingdom in the North". Later, inside the palace, Maurice placed himself inside one of the guard booths awaiting the group trailing behind. *"Attention, attention, ils on arrive!"* : "Attention, attention, they are coming". His reenactment of how the palace guards used to operate, made the group laugh.

After we had toured the palace we arrived at the second parking lot. From here on horses took us to the top of the Citadel. Maurice took time to accentuate that

[56] The French word for king.

the structure, built to prevent the reinstatement of slavery for good, was a symbol of Haiti's once great achievements. Some of the people managing the horses used the word *blan* sometimes, but not extensively. On the top touring the Citadel, the magnificent view was so spectacular that I could write a chapter just on this. However, it was when the tour was done, while descending on horseback back to the second parking lot, that I noticed something regarding the *blan* discourse. One of the assistants to the person leading the horse Christina was sitting on mentioned something where he referred to the word *blan* a couple of times. I was riding behind her and did not think much about it. During the tour I had noticed that despite her knowledge of French, and her brown skin color, thick lips, long, black, loose coarse hair, Christina was treated like any other tourist. [57]

4. At 3000 feet, La Citdaelle Laferrière, is often swept over by fog. At which point it is important to move very carefully, the magnificent view overlooking the rooftop of Haiti is not restricted by any barricades, leaving for a steep fall if one takes the wrong step.

[57] I underline this here, not to argue that Christina should have received any different treatment based on her color, bur rather to highlight that, as you will read in the section below, Christina is called *blan* as well. This is a basis for arguing that *blan* is not linked to skin color.

After the tour Maurice provided lunch back at Lakou Lakay, as part of the program he offered to all clients. I sat down to talk to talk to the student and their experiences on the tour. When I talked to Christina she was different than the other students. She had moved around on the tour with more ease, like when one of the vendors approached her by the first parking lot to sell her goods. "I kind of knew it was going to be similar to Senegal", she said, then paused for a second and added," yeah, a lot of things are really, really similar". With her background from Senegal, Christina was used to moving around in a country with vast material and socioeconomic differences. With her fluency in French she could move around in Haiti in a way different to other foreigners who knew neither of the two official languages. Christina stated, "I always felt really secure here". She then added, "People told me all kinds of things before coming". Now that she had seen it for herself she would definitely want to come back. However, Christina pointed out that she did not have the ability to blend-in despite her life experience from Senegal and knowledge of French. Reveling that Haitians called her *blan* as well, despite Christina having a phenotype that could match most Haitians.

Local distinctions between *blan* and *nèg*

Schuller's (2010) analysis is largely based on his own experience from Port-au-Prince. That could leave him open to critique if it is perceived that his analysis is too subjective. However, I argue that it is hard to render an analysis of the of the word *blan* without taking ones own feelings into account, as being called a *blan* is an experience that is felt. Nevertheless, I would suggest that some of Schuller's arguments are perhaps a bit too situated. I find it difficult to identify with Schuller's notion of always being a *blan*, and would argue that it is perhaps connected with where he stayed in Port-au-Prince, in a middle-class neighborhood (Schuller 2010, 118). Through, having lived in three different provinces in Haiti, I carefully noted down the different meanings of the word *blan*. I will try to give a careful summary of them in the section below.

I too have had negative experiences of the word *blan* whilst walking in the same area near *Champs de Mars* as Schuller (2010, 116) did. The first day I walked out

of my hotel in Port-au-Prince I heard the word more times that I could count. As I walked further downtown, past *Boulevard Jean-Jacques Dessalines (Grand* Rue), I noticed a new touch; the numerous shouts of *blan* got accompanied by the occasional slap, further eliminating any doubt that it was in fact me they were addressing. I too, could not venture out one day in Port-au-Prince without hearing the word at least once.

The city of Jacmel, located in the *Sud-Est* had people shouting out *blan* at you, but much less frequent than Port-au-Prince. At my local residence in Kabik, about a forty-five minute *taptap* ride southeast of Jacmel, being called *blan* was not everyday practice. It was not surprising that my friends in the community had never called me *blan.* They had simply walked up to me and asked for my name the first time they met me. Striking an instant common interest in the sea and surf, along with curiosity as to where I was from, I received perhaps one of the warmest welcomes I had ever received in Haiti. Kabik was a small ocean community with about 200 residents. Because it was so small you got to know your neighbors. Moreover, Kabik had easier access to food either from the mango trees in the forest, or from fishing. This seemed to affect the way many locals interacted with other foreigners who sometimes came to the community to eat, surf and enjoy the sun. This was different to the other places I had visited in Haiti. It had become normal for me to strike up a friendship with someone and then as it progressed, small demands would be made often in terms of monetary requests. However, from day one my friends in Kabik never asked me for anything other than wanting to engage in conversation and exchange ideas.

As I traveled back and forth between my other field sites, the more I came to notice a difference in Kabik. Whenever I was doing a laboring task, such as repairing my surfboard, fixing things in the community, or cooking food on charcoal (a trait considered very traditionally Haitian as the electricity comes and goes a lot), more and more locals would frequently come up to me and remark. One by one they would each utter the same phrase, more or less, *"Tu es pas vraiment un blan, mais, tu es comme un nèg"*: "you are not really a *blan*, but, you are like a *nèg*". As time progressed and days rolled into weeks my nickname

amongst many in the community became, "*nèg kreyol".*[58] It was often uttered when doing something they considered typically Haitian, such as eating chicken with my bare hands or cooking on charcoal. In such cases, many would also say, *"ou manje vréman ayisyen":* "you eat really Haitian". The other reference I experienced when working in Kabik locals would often say: *"nèg travay"*: "working man". Finally there was my neighbor who owned the kiosk next-door to where I lived in Kabik, a woman in her 40s, living with her two kids and husband. She often called me *blan* often in the beginning, and at first seemed skeptical of my presence. But as time passed we got closer. I practiced English with her daughter who in return showed me Creole vocabulary, and I was buying food from their kiosk frequently. In time, the lady who owned the shop learned that my name was Jon, and she used it frequently. Nevertheless, she did not exclude her use of *blan.* However, there was also a change from calling me simply blan to *"mon blan":* "my blan".

This case of being a *nèg* when living and acting like a regular Haitian was not unique for Kabik. At Lakou Lakay, Joab put my presence in Haiti in this way*; "tu es vraiment un nèg Jon"*: "you are really a nèg Jon". When I asked why, he further contextualized it, you live with Haitians, you like Haitians, you talk to Haitians, you do like Haitians, you eat like Haitians. This indicates that the separation between *nèg* and *blan* is not color based but rather it is a class-based distinction. From my experience it is through practice that the distinction between *blans nègs* becomes most visible.

Race and class

Since the separation between *blan* and *nèg* does exist and is practiced in daily life in Haiti, many of my foreigner informants wondered if this made Haiti "a racist country?" It is therefore useful to investigate this a bit further.

Jacqui argued, "no it's the least racist country". In her perspective, "Haiti is all about class". Jacqui shared these insights with me on several occasions, when it was just the two of us, and also when some of her clients would inquire about the

[58] *Kreyol* is the Haitian Creole way of writing "creole", as in being a creole.

use of *blan* and whether it was linked to racism. Jacqui's answer to the suggested binary between the *blan* discourse and racism lay in some of her own background. Jacqui had grown up in England and was convinced that what one saw in Haiti was not racism, but class, "Like England 200 years ago".

In the book *Before Haiti,* historian*,* John D. Garrigus (2006) has investigated the history of the Haitian mulattos and the power this group of people possessed as socially recognizable class in colonial racially segregated *Saint-Domingue,*[59] especially before 1760*.* Known as *"gens-de-couleurs"*: *"*people of color" they were the offspring of concubinage[60] relations in pre-revolutionary Haiti. Much like anthropologist Verena Martinez-Alier (1989) has shown in Cuban colonial society, Garrigus explores race legislation in *French Saint Domingue* as partly a sociological construction. Even in if the norm was not to acknowledge the concubinage offspring officially, many *children of color* inherited the wealth of their fathers and also became owners of property. This made them belong to a different class than other coloreds, who did not own property (Garrigus 2006), something Dubois (2013, 24) has also pointed out. This is visible in Haiti's economy today. Often it is people of a brighter skin color who own and manage many of the restaurants and hotels in the tourist industry.

Jørgen Leth, whom we met previously in Chapter 2, had more than thirty years of experience with Haiti, stating: "jeg har levet længe med haitianerne": " I have lived long with Haitians". He was clear when he said there was no racisms against whites: "Der er ingen racisme mod hvide": "There is no racism against whites", underlining that the big issue in contemporary Haitian society was class, not color.

Mulattoes in both Cuba and Haiti became an important class that contributed to the economy, thus their *color status* was changed. Instead of simply denoting to the old system of categorizing people based on their phenotype (Garrigus 2006, Martinez-Alier 1989), "legal color" (Martinez-Alier 1989) was created. This

[59] Haiti's colonial name.
[60] Concubinage is a sexual relationship between one person and another by which they cannot be married (Martinez-Alier 1989, 3).

meant that a person of color could be categorized as a white person, legally. However, it should be noted that, despite *free people of color* enjoying a different *legal color* than other people of color without property rights and wealth, discriminations occurred. This became especially prevalent in both colonies when the phenotypically white establishment sought to limit the power this rising class of mulattoes had gained (Garrigus 2006, Martinez-Alier 1989).

Martinez-Alier (1989) and Garrigus (2006) historical analysis are useful because they can be used in todays context because they show how class and color are not simply racially predetermined. This is important for understanding situations of race and class in contemporary Haiti. In colonial racially segregated Saint-Domingue (and Cuba), owning property and possessing wealth could prove an even more important nominator than color itself for social mobility in a class society claiming to be established on the basis of race. In my own experience with the Haitian terms *blan* and *nèg,* I have showed how it is possible for a foreigner to have some *downward mobility* in class system that exist in Haiti today. In the separation that exists between *hosts and guests* in contemporary Haiti through the discourse of *blan* and *nèg*, the latter term could be applied to a foreigner [myself] who transcended ordinary ideas held by locals of work, class, and attitudes that they commonly found in foreigners. Class is more than just social status, it is also said be said to be determined by the practices people do, as discussed by Pierre Bourdieu (2010 [1984]) in his book *Distinction*. *Blan* in that sense is not a name simply to describe someone foreign and not from Haiti, but also someone of a different class than locals.

Finally, as I stated previously in this chapter, with Haiti's removal of whites from the country after the revolution and the subsequent return of whites to Haiti in the 20th century, it was not surprising that the word for foreigner became *blan*. If one follows this logic it is also not surprising that *blan* can be said to have been ascribed to class as well, as these foreigners who came back to the country in the 20th century had the financial means to do so. In that sense, Maurice's argument that many Haitians called foreigners *blan* often when they asked for money, made even more sense.

Summary

Through the discourse of *blan*, the *host* and *guest* relationship that exists between locals and foreigners can run into problems. Visitors may feel threatened by the continuous shouts, and further fail to understand their meaning. Rather than arguing for one unanimous meaning of *blan* I have aimed to contextualize the use of the word in Haiti. Through the discourse of *blan* foreigners meet locals and vice versa. The use of *blan* is often the first, and for some the only part, where *hosts* and *guests* share a communication. Hence, the use of *blan* may come across as challenging in Haiti, as visitors come to view it difficult. However, as I have showed there exists more to the *blan* and *nèg* discourse than simply being a foreigner or not, suggesting that it relates to class. Furthermore, I also showed through my own experiences that *blan* could be used as an almost affectionate term, when I was "*Mon blan":* "My blan", to my neighbor in Kabik. From the laughs and jokes we shared, I would struggle to perceive "my blan" as anything other than friendly.

In the next chapter I will discuss how the visitors *negotiates* their view of Haiti. I wills how some of the contrasts that are featured in Haiti's tourist landscape, where the traveler who moves around in this landscape, ultimately has to make his or her own opinion of what is experienced.

4| Ambiguous Haiti: making it "theirs"

In the previous chapter I explored the use of the word *blan* to address foreigners. Being called *blan* is an experience I would say almost every foreigner in Haiti goes through. However, I showed a noticeable difference when a traveler used a tourist bureau (VL), which enabled him to move around differently than a foreigner normally would on the streets of Port-au-Prince. The use of *blan* was not an issue when traveling with VL. By discussing and contextualizing the use of *blan,* I showed that it is in fact not always simply *black* and *white.* By doing so I aimed to enable the reader to better understand the *host* and *guest* dichotomy. I connected the use of *blan* up with issues of class.

In this chapter I will look further into experiences described by visitors in Haiti. I will do so by suggesting that the visitor seeks to understand the community around him or her though imaginaries. Then I suggest that what these imaginaries will contain is to some degree negotiated. My aim in this chapter is to highlight how there seems to exist a difference in the stories told from visitor based partly on their ability to understand what has been happening around them, particularly through language. Furthermore, some of the visitors in this chapter have fears, or ideas about fear, that they are unable to investigate to find out whether or not they are legitimate.

Imagining a dangerous space

In 1983 Benedict Anderson (1991 [1983]) introduced the concept of "imagined communities". In his book bearing the same title, Anderson explains how an "imagined community" differs from that of an *actual community.* Citizens of nations are parts of vast territorial and conceptual landscapes, in which they are unable to grasp their entire community from simply, everyday, face-to-face encounters. Therefore, citizens of this nation conceptualize an impression, an idea of totality of the community that they belong to, yet are never fully able to gain a complete and detailed overview of it (Anderson 1991 [1983]). Can it be said that visitors to Haiti form an idea of Haiti through an *imagined community* in the same way that citizens form ideas of nationhood? By this I mean to ask

whether visitors' ideas about their temporary place of staying be similar to an *imagined community*, as they are never able to gain a full overview of Haiti? I believe this is the case for many visitors in Haiti, and that the idea of an *imagined community* can be used as an explanation model for some of the impressions formed in the eyes of the visitor.

Danger was an issue that concerned many guests and visitors during my fieldwork. As I mentioned in the introduction, the Dominican Republic had almost the same population as Haiti (10 million), but had about four times as many homicides. Nevertheless, they receive a much larger quantity of yearly tourist visits compared to Haiti (Clammer 2012, Séraphin 2011). Still, Haiti was on the US embassy's listing of place not to go (CNN 2013). This contrast is compelling. Similar to the beliefs held by many business owners in Haiti's tourist industry, these strict warnings further hinder tourist development in the country. In this part of the chapter I will look at contrasting views on security from the experiences described by different visitors in Haiti.

An unbiased traveler

Chad was a white male informant who was visiting a friend who worked for the UN in Port-au-Prince, and staying a little less than a week. I met him as when were both flying from Miami to Port-au-Prince we found ourselves talking while waiting to board our the flight. We winded up sitting together during the four-hour flight as well. Chad revealed that before he had bought the ticket to come over he had received all sorts of reactions. Known and unknown people around his hometown New York had dissuaded him when he told them where he indented to go. He remembers talking to a random Haitian-American outside a restaurant. When Chad revealed he was actually going to Haiti, the person asked why he would want to go there. In the end, Chad did buy the tickets. As I further inquired, Chad claimed: "I only realized after I made the decision [to go] that there was a stigma around it". "I was surprised to know it was slightly restricted". He had talked to his friend before booking the tickets. For this reason he knew a little about the country, that it was recovering from a terrible earthquake and that it had a struggling economy. His friend had told him that

"you can get around on your own but it is better to have a car and know where you are going". Furthermore, Chad was uncertain of what to expect after these reports of skepticism following the booking of his flight. "I really have no idea, I have never been to the Caribbean Islands". He pressed his lower lip outwards and gave me look of casual uncertainty.

However, it was not as if Chad had never traveled before. He revealed that he had "been to places that have depressed slums", such as "Mexico city". Yet, he chose to remain in a spirit of optimism about his visit to Haiti, "I am trying to maintain a healthy curiosity", he said and we both smiled. Then he said:

"I had a fear in the very beginning to take my camera, because maybe it would get stolen. But then I thought 'no it won't' and it is not even a nice camera. I realized that all my fears were built on like absolutely no knowledge. I don't even know what the streets look like, how can I have a rational fear?"

Chads openness remained inspiring. Because he had never been there before, he could in fact, not know for certain what Haiti was like. For Chad, he could not form an *imagined community* of Haiti before he had actually been there.

On traveling in a *contested space*

Nevertheless, in spite of Chads openness to Haiti, it remained a country subjected to various opinions, many unfavorable, making Haiti a *contested space,* where contrasting meanings are a result of various interpretations and are in conflict with each other (Low and Lawrence-Zúñiga 2003, 20). The notion of a *contested space* is often found in the discourse concerning Haiti as a dangerous space, linked to poverty, crime, violence and disease.

After completing another tour with Maurice, I talked to and conducted a semi-structured interview with four people who had been the first clients on one of two tours conducted that day. They were two couples, Albert and Claire, and Charles and Jenny. The latter were visiting Albert and Claire who worked at an embassy in Port-au-Prince. Henceforth, I shall also refer to them as the *two*

traveling couples. Albert had worked for the embassy for nine months when I met him, and he explained to me that there was a different way of addressing foreigners in the North compared to Port-au-Prince in the East. As I had encountered myself, Cap-Haïtien had a very different feel to it compared with Port-au-Prince. I remember walking down the street and not encountering the same shouts of *blan!* as I would in Port-au-Prince, and if I did, locals said it with less intensity. This was epitomized when I walked down the street by *Place d'Armes,* the city's square, outside the Cathedral in Cap-Haïtien. Here a *moto-driver* addressed me. Not screaming or aggressively prying for a ride he simply said, "heeeey blancos", with a hoarse voice, winked at me made a "tchk tchk" sound by sucking air inwards in his mouth and with closed teeth, snapping his tongue in one side of his mouth.

5. To the left, local *moto*-drivers in Cap-Haïtien waiting for people to give rides. To the right, a typical Haitian taxi, complete with a sign.

In the North, the Creole accent is different, and people sound singing the way they talk. It is often subjected to jokes from other Haitians who do not come from Cap-Haïtien and the areas surrounding it. Often instead of shouting *blan!* locals in Cap-Haïtien and Milot addressed me in the same manner as I would address someone at home, by greeting and saying hello. Albert summed it up for me in French during our conversation, "plus lents", which translate "slower". This did

not mean that service was slower[61] in the region or that people were less attentive. The attitude towards foreigners was simply less agitated, appearing more "normal" in the sense that it was easier to walk down the street without constantly being addressed. It was more common to see other foreigners in Cap-Haïtien wander the streets compared to Port-au-Prince. Claire, Albert's girlfriend and co-worker, added her interpretation to it. Stating that Port-au-Prince was the capital, and like in any other country, the capital will always have a side to it that is filled with traffic, more crime, noise and a different kind of locals than found in the rest of the country. I asked, what about the strict security warning many embassies maintained on traveling to Haiti, with special note on Port-au-Prince? Albert explained:

"The perception through the media is that Port-au-Prince is a relatively dangerous place, it's wrong". Most experiences with Port-au-Prince… [pauses and thinks] *it is a bit like any other big city in the world".*

Albert told me how statistics do not portray the same picture as the media does of Port-au-Prince. "Statistics are rather low when it comes to violent crime". His partner, Claire added: "I really don't feel it's unsafe, same thing [as] traveling anywhere". She had been working at the embassy for three months. When it came to what was viewed as challenging or difficult during their stay in Haiti, the group of four pointed out that it was the begging and the common "haggling" that seemed to accompany many monetary transaction between *hosts* and *guests* in Haiti. It comes with the territory Albert and Claire said. However, Charles quickly added, "that doesn't mean you like it". Charles was not at ease with receiving a service where he could not pay until the end, "that's really uncomfortable man!" This had been the case when the group of four had gone into the woods in the mountains above Jacmel to visit *Bassin Bleu,* a pool linked to a waterfall. Despite its relatively small size the natural pool is said to be 35 meters deep! With such impressive features, *Bassin Bleu,* is one of Jacmel's promoted attractions both inside and outside of the city. Located about 16 kilometers from Jacmel city

[61] Overall service was slower in all of Haiti compared to other countries which receive more tourists, but that is a topic for another discussion.

center, the "local tourist office" is in charge of maintaining order at the *Bassin Bleu and* has an office placed on-site. Here you have to pay a small fee, 150 gourdes, to the guy admitting you, and fill in a form.[62] There was also a guide there, provided to you by the office. He carried a rope, useful for climbing the top of the waterfall. Charles did not climb the waterfall and therefore did not need to rope. When the guide pushed for 10$US to pay for "rope rental" after the tour, Charles was annoyed and felt uncomfortable.

Earlier in Chapter 2 we met Isabella, Beth, Sophie and Cindy, a group of four American girls who were reflecting on their stay sitting comfortably on the beach of a beachfront hotel resort. They had come to the beachfront hotel to enjoy "sea, sanitation and sun" as Sophie put it, and to further "debrief" from what they had experienced during their stay. They told me of their visit to the North and Central Plateau Provinces as part of a mission-trip with their local church from the U.S. I mentioned earlier that the girls had some worries about HIV in Haiti that seemed to be largely connected only to stigma. As we further discussed their concerns on safety in Haiti, their report was a contrast to Albert, Claire, Jenny and Charles. When I compare these two groups, the difference between them was what worried them about Haiti.

The four girls were concerned with the poverty that they had observed, and "the looks people gave" them, as Cindy described it. She was happy she had registered with embassy before coming here. Based on the warnings people had given her about kidnappings, she had thought it to be useful in case she would go missing. Beth mentioned that she was very uncomfortable with the whistling some men gave her and the others in her group when they walked down the streets. When I asked if these "whistles" came from men with motorbikes, she conformed that often they did. When *locals* shouted *blan!* at them, they also felt uncomfortable. The four girls had landed in Port-au-Prince before their courier met them and took them onwards to Hinche. Based on the little they had seen of the city and airport, Isabella was the only one who thought Port-au-Prince was "ok". Here,

[62] I went through the same procedure when I went there about two months later, paying the same admission fee.

Beth broke in and added that, “it was scary getting from the airport to the transportation” and that it was also “scary with people carrying machetes” in the streets. Beth said, “I would not travel her on my own. You can’t speak to them in their own language”. This was a reflection that she knew neither Creole nor French. Cindy agreed, “I would not come here solely for the purpose of tourism”, further adding, “You’d have to have a purpose for coming here”. Isabella disagreed and interrupted, by saying if she was staying with Haitians she would come back for a holiday here. Sophie did not agree, stating that if she “was staying with Haitians she would be nervous over the language barrier”. “I feel I couldn’t do anything else [other] than come and stay in one place were I knew I would be comfortable”.

The common nominator for all four girls was that they had been on the same prearranged tour regarding where they were going to go and what they were going to see. When they had landed in Haiti a driver from the mission had stood ready and picked them up at the airport. From there on they had driven directly to the gated mission community in Hinche. For the full range of their stay they had a local, Father Edward, accompanying them. He spoke excellent English, had traveled with one of the girls abroad before, and knew the American “sister church” that the girls came from. Father Edward was Haitian himself. Speaking neither Creole nor French, the girls relied on their Haitian caretaker for the entire duration of the stay. He had stayed with them from the picking up at the airport, until the drop-off at the resort were they currently were. Cindy said: “Farther Edward was Haitian and knew the community”, and therefore they had “a lot of trust in God that I would be ok”, as Cindy put it. The other girls nodded in agreement. Despite this the girls showed a concern for what they described as “looks” and “whistling”. From the way they had described their visit, it seemed as if their interaction and exploration of Haiti independently, had hardly taken place, other than a few trips in pairs outside the gates of the mission community where they had stayed.

Biased versus unbiased visitors

To state that the Albert, Claire, Jenny and Charles's description of Haiti as manageable and relatively safe, is the correct one compared to the description of the four missionary girls above would be ethnographically unjust. As Harvey (2006, 119-148) states, people have different basis for experiencing the world around them. Furthermore, to generate a *biased* versus *unbiased* comparison between visitors is not just either. These are ideal categories and many visitors in Haiti will have some sort of *bias* whether it is in favor or against Haiti. Rather it is interesting in how these opinions on Haiti form. Of course there are numerous factors that can be responsible for the varying opinions between these two groups. There is gender for one, the two traveling couples group is a mix of men and women, and the latter group consists of four American girls, traveling with their mission and dependent on their guardian for directions. Here, I could add age as a factor as well.

By suggesting these factors, I am not claiming to possess an intimate access to the way my informants own impressions have been formed. Rather I am trying to make clear that there are numerous factors that can influence what makes up their opinion of Haiti. I am trying to show, through the observations from the different visitors in Haiti that I talked to, that there seems to be a difference in how they interpret their experiences. On describing the many reports I encountered from visitors in Haiti I was presented with a notable difference in those who recognize that although Haiti is not your ordinary tourist destination, it can still be enjoyable. Contrasting reports to this conclusion state that Haiti is a place of danger and uncertainty, and not suitable for a holiday destination.

The four American girls were on a concrete mission, to spread the Catholic word of God further in Haiti, by building a church. In other words, they already had a plan for what they would see and do in Haiti. One of the couples were here to visit their friends, and together all four were exploring various parts of country. Furthermore, their knowledge of French enabled them to talk to locals and move around more freely in the country. Finally, it gives them an ability to listen, confront, and ask questions about things that are being said around them in a

different manner than the four American girls. On the contrary, the four American missionary girls already had a strict travel itinerary for what they would do and see in Haiti. Furthermore, they did not have the same ability to challenge their beliefs about the place they visited as none of the four American girls spoke French or Creole. Therefore, Haiti to them was a place where they constantly relied on others who spoke these languages, in order to communicate with locals. In this way, these girls were not able to challenge their "imagined community" and perhaps see a more nuanced side to the country they were visiting. These girls had landed in Port-au-Prince, got picked up by their driver and been driven straight to Hinche, Central Plateau. Here, they had stayed a week in gated community with walls, in the local living quarters set up by their church. After their volunteer week was up, they had finished their stay in a beach resort in the North. This local business provided them with joys and comfort of a nice "beach holiday". Although more discretely than hotels in Port-au-Prince, the community remained gated, separating them from the community of some seven hundred inhabitants living in the village outside. Perhaps a further challenge to these girls' *imagined community* of Haiti was that they had seen it through the task-oriented view which was their "mission" in Haiti: to come as helpers representing their church community. Already the discourse they had orientated themselves with, told the story of a community in need, where they had a specific utilitarian task (building a church). This discourse states that Haitian society is missing something. Furthermore, the girls seemed to relate to what they had been told in advance, that they were going to a community in need with lots of poverty and noted danger. However, they had little ability to test this knowledge, as they did not speak the language. The result was that the girls seemed to confirm what they had been told by their mission regarding imaginaries about security and despair in Haiti.

Enclave capitalism in Haiti

I mentioned how James Ferguson has brought a new perspective to the classical thoughts about capitalism as a system where wealth "flows" from its geographical center point to the surrounding space. As he states, wealth in some developing countries "jumps". (Ferguson 2006). Haiti certainly has its aspects of

enclave capitalism represented in the tourist industry.

The Royal Caribbean Cruise Line has sustained its travels to Haiti since the mid 1980s despite the numerous overthrown governments and reports of civil unrest in the country. Through decades the company has docked its liners at Labadee, a private cruise ship dock and resort leased by the Royal Caribbean Cruise Line from the Haitian government. The lease expires in the year 2050 (The Economist 2009). This enclave is stunning. Held from public access by a large black metal fence protected by armed guards on the inside of the fence, it is located no more than about 12 kilometers from Cap-Haïtien along the north coast of the country, and caters to more than 3000 tourists who enjoy temporary leisure activities here on one of the cruise liners many stops in the Caribbean.

6. Labadee. In the back you see the Royal Caribbean Cruise Liner, in the front, the boat taxis that takes you to Labadie village. Labadee cruise ship port and the playground facilities are located to the right of the picture, behind a dark metal fence.

To many, Labadee port was a structure that symbolized development. Its modern facilities together with the wealth that all Haitians seemed to be aware circulated within those walls seemed to be strong reasons for this. However, none of the Haitians I talked to, except William who worked in there, had ever been inside. The port was closed off from outsiders and I could not enter either.

Across the bay where the cruise ship was docked, you found a beautiful half moon bay that was the home to *Labadie* a little coastal town that had existed there since before the construction of the now nationally famous port. The Royal Caribbean Cruise had appropriated the name of *Labadie* and given it a slightly different spelling. Some Haitians spoke of the real *Labadie*, the village, and sometimes the *"faux"*: "fake" *Labadee*, to make the distinction between the two clear. I spoke to the female vendor of fried Haitian snacks on the outside of the fence, asking if any tourists ever come out? *"Pas vraiment"*: "not really", she stated as I purchased one of her snacks for a five gourdes. I went crossed over to *Labadie* using the local taxi-service boat that cost 10 gourdes, a little less than 25 American cents at the time. A half island community, its only connection to *route de Labadie*[63] was this five-minute boat ride to and from *Labadee*. As I got off I was immediately met with happy youngsters who wanted to know explicitly why I had come over? I sat down and talked with them about how often they received foreign visitors. The youngsters argued over whether they received 1-2 or 2-4 "*blans"* weekly.

Later on I met by chance Bernard, an informant I knew from Cap-Haïtien who commuted between Labadie and Cap-Haïtien. While in Labadie, Bernard could correct the data I had collected earlier with the youngsters. He explained that *blans* passed Labadie weekly, but most did not set foot in the village. Local foreign entrepreneurs owned a speedboat and took cruise ship tourists to a "private" beach near the port of Labadee, but they did not take them to Labadie. For the "*blans"* that did set foot in Labadie, Bernard claimed it was no more than 1-2 people. They came from *Norm's Place*, a local guesthouse that was also only accessible via boat, located in-between *Labadee* and *Labadie.* These were not cruise ship tourists. Bernard and I sat down and had a drink. From the view of the bar the contrast was compelling. Here only a five-minute boat-ride from the cruise ship port was a small, friendly, local community. A real chance to experience Haitian culture up front. I could hardly imagine how robberies or threats of violence would be a problem in this small island community. Anyone

[63] This was the name of the road from Cap-Haïtien.

doing anything bad would immediately stick out. Furthermore, where would the robbers go? One small port made up the only access point to the half-moon bay that housed “the real Labadie”. As this was not enough to reassure any visitor, Labadie even had police station!

7. The contrasts of an enclave industry. On the top, the fence protecting Labadee cruise ship port, in the middle, the decade-leased property of Royal Caribbean Cruise Line and all its facilities, and at the bottom, the view from a local pub in Labadie.

Economic exchange taking place at Labadee does not include the surrounding community. Inside the guarded metal fences of Labadee Cruise Ship Port, the wealth that the tourists spend goes to the Royal Caribbean Cruise Ltd. It stands as a prime example of “luxurious tourist development”. As covered in the intro, large, corporate tourist businesses are known to employ fewer people locally, make use of more automated processes and import more goods, such as

foodstuff (Richter 2001, 287). However, with this in mind, it should be noted that some of the services provided from small-scale businesses in the Haitian tourist industry, in some cases a large proportion, are also dependent on imports. Owner of Cormier Plage Beach Resort, Monsieur Simonnet stated: "We import everything, everything is underdeveloped, whatever [part of] the sector […]". Hiring locals as their labor force, Cormier Plage had two employees serving each of the 36 rooms.[64] The Hotel's issue was not a lack of motivation for using local resources, but a difficulty in getting all the supplies they needed. Many were simply not found in the country. Another hotel owner, Dominique Dupuy of *Auberge du Picolet,* had stated something along the similar terms. Although buying local foods stuffs such as lobsters, the timber used in the hotel had been imported. As Haiti had few trees, not known for their quality either, this had been the only way when constructing the hotel.

Despite such imports, many small-scale business are to a larger degree embedded in the local community and thus serve as a place where the tourists can view more of the local community than they can from a larger, more corporate company. Enclave industries operate at an even greater dependency from local environment and changes occurring in them. The fact that the Royal Caribbean was able to maintain its visits just under a week after the 2010 earthquake (Booth 2010) shows how independent this sort of business is from not only the local community but Haiti in general. Nevertheless, the Royal Caribbean reportedly pays a $10 tax for each visitor they bring into Haiti (Clammer 2012, 191),[65] providing a source of income for a country highly reliant on foreign aid. Many would also see this as a good thing.

Negotiating views in *impression enclaves*

I wonder if it is possible to take Ferguson's ideas about capitalist enclaves and translate it into how impressions are formed in the eyes of the visitor? By in a resort that shields the visitors from the local community and the rest of Haitian society, one might wonder what such visitors base their impression of the

[64] Cormier Plage was expanding while I was there to include 14 new rooms.
[65] The fee is reported to have increased to $US12 in March 2015 (Royal Caribbean blog 2015).

country on? Labadee is defiantly the most extreme example. As I came from the outside of the fence, I was not able to access and collect data there. However, if visitors who are not in Labadee spend their time in Haiti thinking that they should only stay inside the resort and cannot communicate with locals one might ask if this might bear similarities to the enclave of Labadee?

As I have shown, some impressions of Haiti from visitors seemed to be based more on intuition from experiences rather than direct physical experiences such as actual violence or threats. The story the four American girls told was not unique but a reoccurring tale. I had heard a very similar account from visitors on another tour I did with Maurice.

Earlier in Chapter 3, we met Christina, the Senegalese-American on one of Maurice's tours of Sans Souci Palace and the Citadel. Quinn, Molly, Nancy and Andreas, all white people in their early twenties, were part of the same trip as Christina and belonged to the Omega University. The purpose of their trip was to look at architecture and buildings as part of the students' field of study. Part of their trip had involved a stay in Limbé, located about 25 kilometers west of Cap-Haïtien. As a response to the negative safety stamp Haiti had in America Molly said they had a "buddy-system" where they would always go two-and-two whenever they walked out of the gates of their living quarters. Quinn asserted this was "a school thing that gives safety". When I asked the group if they felt safe in Haiti, Andreas was quick to reply, "some places are questionable". He explained how people would sometimes yell *blan!* at them. Furthermore, in Limbé "certain age groups" such as teenagers with motorbikes would often give them "questionable looks". Despite this Andreas insisted, "I was not scared or anything". Molly, however, added that she had felt really uncomfortable with how some of the guys in town would whistle at them. Maybe it was just "harmless flirting" she says but she "did not like it".

I do not have the ability to know what it is like to be a white young lady traveling for the first time to Haiti. However, I do know that when the students had no ability to communicate verbally with the *whistlers* it poses a problem for learning

more about them. I had come across this type of whistling myself many times from guys with *motos*. It was a common gesture I observed, made to numerous visitors – both boys and girls. From my own use of taxi-*motos* I knew this was often a way to get your attention. Often whistling and then nodding upwards with their heads or smiling or winking, a way to signal that they were free for a ride. For the American Omega students, much was left to interpretation, as they could not speak the language to further inquire what the *moto-drivers* wanted. To negotiate a view of Haiti in such a context can be viewed as having knowledge formed from an enclave, where only a limited amount of information is available. Hence, I use the term *impression enclaves* where views run at risk of not being sufficiently grounded in actual experiences, but are based on an idea of what might look threatening or negative concerning Haiti.

Making it "theirs"

To say that the viewpoints held by the American Omega students are a result of the where they have been in Haiti, what they knew before coming, and their means to understand what has been happening around them through language, is perhaps an obvious conclusion. Furthermore, it does not take into consideration how the students themselves have participated in creating the spatial categories that help form "their Haiti". Anthropologist Arnd Schneider (2003) has emphasized in the article, *on appropriation,* how human beings appropriate[66] various aspects found in human cultures and *makes it their own* (Schneider 2003, 217). In the same sense the many people that engage with Haiti, through discourse, through experiences, they seek to create their own idea of Haiti. However, this idea can be influenced by other representations of Haiti that already exists, often found in media discourses. Nevertheless, even though the Omega students were reliant on others to go places and understand what was being said to them, they still contribute in shaping their impression of the material space by exploring it. In other words, people have agency when they make up their opinion of Haiti, and are not simply influenced by whatever the surrounding are, they engage with them and make their interpretation, or as Schneider (2003) might state, their *appropriation*.

[66] To appropriate is Late Latin for "to make ones own" (Schneider 2003, 217).

However, when visitors *negotiate views* they often have access to knowledge about Haiti before coming there. By *negotiating views* I mean that they themselves play a role in deciding on what they want to focus on when making up their own impression of Haiti. I do not question that the experience described by all visitors in this thesis are based on how they actually felt during their a given moment. It appears that for some visitors Haiti holds an entirely different spatial shape, predominantly as something negative. In experiences described such as those by the American Omega students or those of the four missionary girls, Haiti is described as a dangerous space, based on how they have *felt* and interpreted situations. Here I would like to recapitulate on Harvey's (2006) use of Lefebvre's (1991 [1974]) theory on space. "S*paces of representation",* the discourses (Harvey 2006, 130), e.g. found in the media, certainly describes Haiti as dangerous and violent place; a *material space* to be viewed with uncertainty. How a person comes to *view* the physical landscape he or she has been in, the "*representation of space"* (Harvey 2006, 130) may be influenced by the discourse, "*spaces of representation",* concerning a place. To remind the reader, one *space* in Harvey's (2006, 132) terminology does not hierarchically influence the other. So, to be absolutely clear, by having read negative media reports on Haiti not all visitors view their experiences in Haiti as negative and threatening.

This is visible in my ethnography as well, when I introduced Brian in the introduction. He can be described as a more active "negotiator". As he had previous experience from both Uganda and Haiti Brian knew he was going back to a place that struggled with poverty as well as a bad reputation. Brian did have his concerns. He expressed ambivalence about driving on the road, being worried about getting robbed at night and disliking the "confrontations" that would sometimes emerge from haggling on a local fee or price. However, Brian had a clear intention in mind. Despite his concerns, Brian actively chose to experience Haiti and explore new sides to the country. This meant accepting some of the things that he did not feel to good about, such as haggling with *moto-taxis* at night in order to come out and experience Cap-Haïtien's night life. One night when I was talking to Brian about this we sat on the open cement platted

outdoor area of the newly established *Deco Plage Bar and Restaurant* right by the ocean. This was a busy night as the Ministry of Tourism had chosen to have their dinner here after a meeting in town. Brian and me sat on the chairs waiting for our food to come, in view of the ocean and illuminated by the moon and the stars. The sound of waves crashing in on the cobblestoned sandy-beach provided a mysterious atmosphere, as Brian described the natural and cultural differences he had enjoyed discovering in Haiti. The owner of Deco Plage, Gabby, had come back to Haiti from many years in the U.S. and chosen the location as he thought it could be an idyllic place to start as a home to tourists. Remembering the days of his childhood when it was more common for Americans to visit Haiti for the sake of tourism, this night in particular was special for Gabby as the busy crowd rolled in.

The point I want to make in regards to how visitors negotiate their views of Haiti, is that with access to more knowledge, and with the ability to understand what is happening around them, visitors seem to negotiate a view that takes into account the positive features that the Ministry of Tourism invites tourists to experience. Not all visitors are as conscious in negotiating a positive view of Haiti as Brian. Thus the ministry needs to make sure that more people form a positive view from their experience in Haiti.

Impression management of tourist spaces

As part of the strategy to coordinate the country's tourism industry, the Ministry of Tourism had started meeting with local business owners. During these meetings they provided insight into their plans for lifting Haiti's tourism industry and made an attempt to demonstrate the standard that was expected by foreigners and necessary to contribute to the betterment of the industry. One way of doing this was by showing pictures of different hotel rooms, comparing those that were considered good and those that were considered not living up to the ministry's standard (for the latter their location was kept anonymous). I was present at two of these meetings, one in Jacmel and one in Cap-Haïtien.
In the cultural art city of Jacmel, the Minister of Tourism Stéphanie Villedrouin, showed the ministry's plans for refurbishing the city's "rue de commerce". The

project was called “Destination Jacmel” and would construct what could be referred as a “tourist zone” in downtown Jacmel. See appendix C for a map of this. The plan showed how the old colonial architecture, much of it damaged in the earthquake, would be renovated. Cobblestone would be laid on the walking path and a garbage service would make sure the streets were clean. Finally, the city beach (*plage*) would be cleaned up, the walkway already under construction would be completed along the beach, and white sand would be transported to cover the grey muddy surface, which at the time of my fieldwork made up *Congo Plage.*

The presentation sparked interest and discussion amongst the business owners in the conference hall. As the ministry opened for questions, one of the local business actors got up and addressed the Minister of Tourism. What was she going to do with the strict security warnings on Haiti? The room was filled with applause. Villedrouin’s answer was clear, suggesting that one entry point into Haiti as one of the reasons for the negative security warnings. As I showed earlier, despite Prime Minister Laurent Lamothe reassurance that Haiti is one the safest countries in Latin America (Caribbean Journal staff 2013), and the statistics to prove so, Haiti has not enjoy a good reputation on security abroad. The minister was quick to state to crowd, both in French and English “that is why I am fighting for this airport”. Villedrouin was referring to the reconstruction of Cap-Haïtien Airport. At the time, the airport was close to obtaining an international standard enabling it to receive the same kind of air travel as Port-au-Prince.[67] In other words, because there was only one entry point for Haiti’s visitors, namely the International Airport in Port-au-Prince, all the initial impressions would be formed from there on. Port-au-Prince was different than the rest of Haiti.[68] Villedrouin was confident that once this airport was completed, the international security warning on Haiti, as what she called a “red” zone, would have to be altered and divided up into different “zones”: “orange”,

[67] The airport opened to international commercial air travel in October 2014 as Haiti’s second International Airport after Port-au-Prince (Charles 2014). Before that, Cap-Haïtien airport, catered mostly to inland flights, Caribbean regional flights, and a Miami-Cap-Haïtien/Cap-Haïtien-Miami route.

[68] I have previously showed that this is where the main crime rates are found. I showed how the use of *blan was* very extensive in the capital, compared with the rest of Haiti.

"yellow" and "green", tied to each specific region. Since the other regions in Haiti suffered much less crime that Port-au-Prince. Her conclusion was consistent with the UN's own security reports which acknowledged that the majority of reported security concerns took place in Port-au-Prince (UNODC 2014, 85).

When Villedrouin stressed the importance on generating several entry points into Haiti to lift the strict security warning put on the country, she cannot simply be said to have spoken about *real danger*. The statistics I referred to earlier (UNODC 2014) show the danger was clearly not as imminent as the Canadian, American or British embassy would have had it. Neither the business owners of hotels, restaurants and prominent art-shops in Jacmel, thought the security warning to be accurate of the actual situation in the country which was much more calm. Therefore, the fight for Haiti's second international airport can also be seen as a form of *impression management*, a way to influence initial views formed by visitors as they passed through a different airport on their arrival. By Claire and Albert description of differences between the busy, noisy capital, and Cap-Haïtien, I could understand why the Ministry of Tourism would want to construct a second international airport here for the sake of tourism.

Summary

In this chapter I have looked at contrasting experiences from visitors in Haiti. Where some hold Haiti as a tourist space in negative terms, others have a more positive outlook. Here I suggest that visitors play a part in negotiating their view of Haiti. A way to explain how these views are negotiated can be through visitors constructing an "imagined community" of Haiti. I demonstrated this in how the different guests account for their visits. I also suggest that the ethnography presented seems to demonstrate how *information* is crucial for the accounts the visitors make. If visitors do not know enough of what is happening around them, then they might form imaginaries of Haiti as if they were in an enclave looking out (*impression enclaves*), despite actually having gone outside of their accommodation. By having access to more information and by having the ability to understand, e.g. through language, and contextualize some of the experience these visitors might form a different view of Haiti. Finally, I demonstrate what

can be viewed as the Ministry of Tourism's own attempt at impression management, by constructing a second international airport.

In the next chapter I will show how, the Ministry of Tourism's invitation to come "experience it" can be regarded as an *open space policy*, and how is played out in a tourist space that may not always be typical of what a visitors expects. Nevertheless, through entrepreneurs in the tourism business "experience it" comes to life.

5| Open space policy

In the previous chapter I discussed the positive and negative experiences described by visitors and suggested that these were not simply experienced but negotiated. By this I meant that, regardless of the experience the traveler had had, it was the travelers who had the ability to decide how they would view their experiences. I argued that with more information available, the visitor would be able to further contextualize his or her experiences in Haiti.

This chapter deals with the Ministry of Tourism's invitation to "experience it" in practical terms. As their slogan refers to Haiti's *unique* aspects that set it apart from the other Caribbean nations, it is a slogan that emphasizes that a traveler needs to get a physical, or on might say, active experience of what makes Haiti *unique.* I remind the reader here that these *unique* features are not compressed into a single space. Rather, Haiti's *unique* features can be found in places such as Hotel Oloffson in Port-au-Prince, the beautiful natural surroundings at one of the beaches in the North, the Citadel in the same province, or through music and dance as I will describe in this chapter in regards to Hotel Florita's concert nights and Vodou rituals. These are just a few of the many features the Ministry of Tourism can promote.

In this chapter I want to show the effects of having an *open space policy*, which is what I argue "experience it" is. I will show that the role that a particular small-scale business plays in allowing a visitor to move around freely, without any need for a barrier between the visitor and the surrounding environment. This shows how an *open space policy* may work. I will also show how an *open space policy* cannot always work, and how having a regulated tourist space can be useful. I argue this by showing again how visitors have different knowledge when the move around in the Haitian material space and show an unpleasant experiences from a rather uncritical traveler. However first let us start with the open tourist space, Hotel Florita.

Hotel Florita: an open tourist space

Because Haiti is lacking “tourists zones”, small-scale businesses involved in tourism form a space where many of the experiences of Haitian cultures are brought near to the tours, in a context that does not require them to go out into the Haiti and look for them alone.

Hotel Florita was the most known Hotel in Jacmel, and I had gotten in contact with its owner, Joe Cross, allowing me to do field observations there. In addition to hosting various guests from all over the world, Hotel Florita had frequent concert nights as a display of local Haitian music and culture. I documented these concert nights and interviewed many guests present in the hotel. Some became closer informants. Hotel Florita in itself was a fascinating building. Originally built in 1888 for one of Jacmel’s “big families”, as Joe called them, who were involved in the business of harvesting and selling coffee. Back then it was both an office and house. Hotel Florita was painted in white, with light blue painted doors and doorframes, with fine detailing on the wrought iron French-styled verandas that covered the top two floors of the three-story building. Written on the wall in light blue, it read *Hotel Florita*

Its owner, entrepreneur Joe Cross, was a man of many exploits who had spent a lot of his life on the move. From managing a prominent bar in New York City to running an event bureau in Buenos Aires, Joe stated that he “was never very good at staying in one place”. Speaking with a voice that was always slightly hoarse, Joe would go from soft to hard in seconds. “Why I came here?” he repeated scantly as I had asked him the question. “I was washed ashore here in 1981”. He answered me in a voice loud and straightforward. Joe’s answers could have been lines taken straight out of a movie script, so I attempted to get a more profound response out of him. “So how did you end up here?” I asked. Joe blurted out: “Bunch of accidents!” then added with a mumble: “all accidents is how I ended up here”. Joe’s somewhat elusive answers should not be mistaken for indifference or uncertainty. Although often maintaining a sarcastic, slightly dark-sense of humor, Joe had strong sentiments connected to Haiti. These sentiments could be expressed when he referred to his dislike towards the strict American

travel warning put on the country: “Maybe I should trade in my American passport for a Haitian one”, followed by a laugh. Other times, Joe’s sentiments were expressed more clearly. Once we passed one of the many paintings hanging in the hotel. As we passed the staircase leading up to the rooms Joe stopped and explained me the contents of a painting with several Haitians carrying various flags of different nations. While gazing at the painting, Joe made a chuckle, “huh”, then slowly remarked in a gentle tone, ”Flag Day, it’s great isn’t it?” With softness in his eyes and an unusual sentimentality in his voice, it made me realize what Joe meant with his “fascination” and adoration for Haiti. It was genuine; he truly felt something about this place.

Due to the lack of visitors in Haiti in general, Hotel Florita saw days with fewer clients than the hotel had capacity to house. As we stood by the old mailboxes on the hotel’s ground floor Joe stated that he was trying “to get mom, daddy and sis here”, to establish Haiti as a regular country that people can come visit with their whole family. He had done this himself in 1982, when he decided to spend a longer period it Haiti. The stay was so pleasant that he bought the building in 1989. Shortly after it became Hotel Florita. It was hard trying to create an image of Haiti as a friendly country that people wished to come to. Despite that the country had many interesting things to offer Joe felt the strict security warnings made Haiti come across as a place one should not visit. This made Joe angry. “There is Vodou, pleasant people, they’re [the guests] safe…”, “so why this alarming on the [safety] warning?” he asked in an elevated tone. The first time I had seen Joe was at my first Vodou ritual in Jacmel. His opinions were rooted in reason. In Jacmel you could go out at night, see a Vodou ritual close to the city center, and then come back to wherever you where staying in town. Jacmel had lots of nice, not heavily trafficked streets one could walk in. Here it was possible to shop for art, without too much haggling. I had observed this on a tour with a group of American first-time visitors on one of Jacqui’s daytrips to Jacmel. Jacmel had been badly damaged in the earthquake, yet still much of the old colonial architecture remained. For many visitors in Haiti, Jacmel was a “must-see”.

One thing that strikes me post-field is how open the material space was in Hotel Florita. The light blue, curved, hinged double-doors were always open and attached on the outside wall so outsiders could look straight in. As you enter you are met with a long, thick, dark wooden bar. The open space, bar and dining area has a tree in the middle of it, exposed brick, and maroon tiled floor. Everywhere you look the walls are covered in art. To the right of the main entrance was a large papier-mâché tiger mask hanging over couch section there. There were several papier-mâché masks located in the hotel. Then there were the paintings; they were everywhere. Made in rich color, with portraits of everything from Haiti's Flag Day, to the earthquake and animals morphed with human qualities. The open space policy of Hotel Florita is extremely important because I argue, in a way, it embodies the policy of the Ministry of Tourism, "Haiti - experience it", or "*Se la pou'w là*": "It is there for you". Simply by walking around in Hotel Florita you could in fact, "experience it" because the structure itself embodied so much of Haitian culture and life through music, local visitors and the surrounding art.

Hotel Florita was a place where locals met foreigners. During opening hours, it remained open to all and it was commonly visited by many of Jacmel's inhabitants. There were cigar salesmen, self-proclaimed tour guides, local singers and musicians, artists trying to sell some of their art. Joe let them all be in his hotel and he chose to keep it very open. His choice to let Hotel Florita remain and open space was very conscious. The safety warning put on Haiti included recommendations that asked travelers to register with the embassy if they came here and asked them to alternate their travel routes was very untrue to the Haiti Joe knew. As Joe put it this was: "Horseshit of absolute first order!"

Exploring the open space

By maintaining an open hotel that everyone could visit, Joe proved how the strict security warnings and negative impressions of Haiti did not reflect "his Haiti". The open space policy of Hotel Florita had generated a place that transcended the enclavistic elements maintained by other resorts that chose to have a wall to separate their clients from the various aspects of Haiti found outside it. I spent a lot of time in Hotel Florita. When there were concert nights on in the evenings I

would come in and listen. The concert nights were an attempt to create events that exposed some of Jacmel's cultural features to both foreigners and locals. Sometimes they would involve a cover charge for guests who came after a certain hour. The artists were Haitians and their repertoire was often a mix of Creole and French musical numbers. In the daytime I would also come in for coffee, brunch and often did my transcriptions in Hotel Florita.

In many ways, Hotel Florita was a contrast to many of the other Hotel establishments in Cap-Haïtien, Port-au-Prince and Jacmel. This was evident in the way that anyone it seemed, could walk in and out of the hotel. Often when I was in-between appointments I would spend time meeting the guests. This is how I met, Amy and Manuel who I had met briefly at one of the concert nights. Their job in Haiti was to teach a *street mediation* program in Port-au-Prince's *Cité Soleil*, a notorious slum commune in Port-au-Prince home to around 300,000 people. The program's purpose was to promote dialogue as the ultimate conflict resolver over violence and harassment. One afternoon in Hotel Florita they were sitting at the bar enjoying a drink each. The bright red drinks, in tall glasses, with fanciful fruits in and umbrellas, made for the perfect Caribbean cliché picture. Although, much as Amy and Manuel were about to disclose, Haiti was no cliché.

They had been to Haiti five times before, with stays varying from two to five weeks at a time. However, as they emphasized, they had only been to Port-au-Prince, and thus, really never seen Haiti before they went out of the capital. "It is like the epicenter of security is Port-au-Prince and as you get out…" "ahh", Amy breathed in, lifted her arms, put them on her stomach, then let out air as she let her arms flow out on each side expressing a clear sign of relief. She then added, "The U.S. is more dangerous on a sliding scale".

When Amy referred to the sliding scale, she was not only expressing an opinion but facts. Overall, the U.S. had more violence related deaths and crime compared to Haiti, but the population was also a lot higher. However, if one compares homicide rate divided on different states in the U.S. (UNODC 2014, 26) to the fact that most of the violent deaths happening in Haiti occurs in Port-au-Prince

(UNODC 2014, 85), Amy's statement makes a lot more sense. The Minister of Tourism wished to construct more international airports in Haiti, allowing for the country to be divided up into different security zones as the U.S. had been (UNODC 2014, 26). Perhaps more travelers would adopt the nuanced view held by Amy and Manuel once they experienced Haiti out of Port-au-Prince.

"Tourist zone": a regulated space

I have pointed out that Haiti's tourism industry is still developing. At the time of my visit, there were few "tourist zones" in Haiti. A "tourist zone" is a material space within an area that is regulated particularly for tourists. This means that certain recognizable features many tourists seek, such as, souvenir shops, restaurants and recognizable languages are in place. It also means that what is undesirable for tourists is *not* there. For instance in the Dominican Republic, "tourist zones" are related by the tourist police (POLITUR). Their spatial practice manages the social use of the tourist space, who goes there and who does not. One might ask can a regulated tourist space still bring out Haiti's *unique* features?

Towards the end of my fieldwork I traveled back to Lakou Lakay in Milot to document the training of tour guides in Haiti. Maurice's cultural center was often used for affairs conducted with the Ministry of Tourism. His vast knowledge as a tour guide and native of Milot proved very useful now that the ministry was preparing to receive more guests to the town. Part of the Action Plan, presented in Chapter 2, was to be able to accommodate tourists from Labadee cruise ship port who would arrive in coaches and have a day-trip to Milot. Here they experienced the historical sites of *Parc Nationale Historique:* The National Historical Park where Sans Souci Palace and the Citadel were located. It was mid-May, and less than a month before the really heavy rain was about to start. This left the forest covered in a mist that kept the air particularly moist, especially at dawn and dusk.

In collaboration with the *Canadian Institut de Tourisme et d'Hôtellerie du Québec* (ITHQ), the Ministry of Tourism had taken the initiative to train tour guides for

the park. This was a direct initiative to try and make Haiti easier to "experience" and could be described as converting the Sans Souci and The Citadel premises into a so-called "tourist zone". This initiative can be viewed as the Ministry of Tourism gaining more control over the experiences tourists have in Haiti.

The ministry had already constructed kiosks in the park near the palace and the Citadel. These were meant to function as information stands as well as to be a place where tourists could buy souvenirs if they did not want to buy them from the local street vendors surrounding the Citadel. Through the training program the ministry would reinforce the capacity of guides and interpreters in the park. It seemed that the only thing missing was a paved road from the Labadee cruise ship port to Milot in order to start receiving more tourists.

I participated at the first round of training sessions lead by co-workers Aude Guiraud and Serge Germain, who both spoke French and English. Aude was French, but now lived in Port-au-Prince and worked for the Ministry of Tourism. Serge was a Canadian guide and teacher at ITHQ. He had worked together with Aude when she lived in Canada They divided their tasks in Milot; Serge was in charge of directly training guides, while Aude was "a training guide" for the people who would service the kiosks. Both were highly concerned about professional etiquette.

Before Serge arrived, a notice had been given from the Ministry of Tourism to all the locals in Milot, inviting anyone who was interested in becoming a tour guide to participate in Serge's upcoming training. This first selection process lasted for two days and was provided free of charge to anyone who chose to participate. Those who were particularly ambitious about becoming tour guides would be selected to participate in a second training program. This second part of the program would be available for a small fee, affordable to many of the citizens in Milot. The first morning of the training, I counted more than twenty participants. That day was concentrated only on the Sans Souci Palace. Much like the many tours I had accompanied Maurice on, we moved around the different locations at Sans Souci: the Palace gates, main stairs, garden, and so forth. Each student was

given an opportunity to present at the given spot. This way, each student was allowed to get an idea of how it felt to move in front and guide the group. Students were evaluated and awarded points as they went along with their presentations. Like Aude, Serge instructed his students to not forget their "code étiquette": "code of conduct".

"The relation with your client is a professional relation. You will not use it to find a 'petite amie'[69] or another woman. You can have a friendly tone with them but it is to remain a professional".

Serge would often remind his students to "[r]espect the demand of the client[..]" further reminding them to not to ask for a tip. If the client wished to do so, it was of their choice, but it should not be asked for.

Manuel whom I met at Hotel Florita had said that he believed that traveling by the means of local transportation such as *taptap* further added to "street cred", as a way for other Haitians to respect you, in addition to being a great way to see the country and meet the people. As they had driven out of Port-au-Prince, and just had several days in the mountains surrounding the *Sud-Est* on a trekking tour, they had both become even more skeptical to the international hotel chain development that had started happening in Port-au-Prince at the time. Amy called it "5-star hotel bullshit". Manuel claimed "Haiti really starts to reveal itself when you open yourself up to the right people". As they had ventured out of Port-au-Prince their impressions of Vodou had changed accordingly. From not knowing much about it, to coming to learn more about it and receiving the impression that it was in their words an "ancient animistic belief. Rather than describing it as brutal and threatening they had experienced of a lot of respect for the surrounding world at Vodou rituals, including those they had witnessed animal sacrifice in.

Amy and Manuel were a good example of how visitors' impressions of Haiti alternated based on where they had been in the country. By changing their

[69] A girl/woman to whom one has a romantic attachment.

location from Port-au-Prince, they felt they had truly gotten to experience and understand Haiti. However, the couple had had more time to ease into Haiti, learn Creole, and could therefore venture out more confident than other. Their desire to explore Haiti openly was admirable. However, my effort in this subsection is not to try and frame a regulated tourist space, such as a "tourist zone", as something negative. As Manuel mentioned their use of *taptaps,* he emphasized the ability to of being able to use local transportation for traveling in Haiti. Working as a street mediator in Cité Soleil, one of the world's poorest slum cities, he and Amy knew Haiti's *rougher* sides. This meant that when the couple ventured out openly in Haiti, they carried with them a lot of experience for handling tough situations. Their knowledge of Creole came much in hand as well. However, not all visitors in Haiti had these advantages, and therefore a regulated tourist space might be more suited for them. If the development of the "tourist zone" at *Parc Nationale Historique* would further lead to visitors from Labadee to start going on day trips to these historic sites, than this can be regarded as a huge progress in making sure that more people "experienced it".

Inventors of culture

In the previous chapter I argued that visitors *negotiate* their view of Haiti. Might another way to speak of this to say that they *invent* their experiences? Roy Wagner (1981) has written about *the invention of culture*. Using the example of anthropologists in the field, Wagner states they have had a tendency to study cultures as an "objective thing" *waiting to be discovered* or *depicted.* If culture were "an objective thing", then learning it would be the same for everyone (Wagner 1981, 16). This is not the case. Different people will depict and describe the same *culture of reference* sometimes in vastly different ways. Wagner goes as far as saying that it is *invented.* However, this *invention* is reliant on *convention*s; known features that are recognizable and that several people of a culture agree upon. In other words, even though every human being can be said to invent the culture they meet, many people's *inventions* are remarkably similar. People in the same environment affect each other's views, as communication between people is only possible if they share an understanding that they can agree upon. *Conventions* enable these different individuals to communicate (Wagner 1981,

38). However, the *invention* is also reliant on *context;* preconceived notions made up of ideas used to understand the world the inventor comes from previously, applied to the new setting encountered. For Wagner, the *invention of culture* concerns everyone; every human subject in any cultural context (Wagner 1981).

Convention, invention, and *context* are co-dependent in Wagner's (1981) terms. The ways in which we interpret the world is shaped by the ways in which we already categorize it. Yet at the same time, the new experiences formed about the world contribute into shaping how we categorize our physical surroundings and happenings in our minds. In other words, one cannot exist without the other, both *convention* and *invention* is "happening" at the same time.

Going back to Harvey's discussion of Lefebvre's threefold division of space,[70] there is a similarity to Wagner. Harvey argues that these *categories of space* cannot be separated apart, or listed hierarchically as one causing the other. It is "the dialectic relation between the categories that really counts" (Harvey 2006, 132). However, these categories of space are useful analytically when understanding how human beings conceptualize the world (Harvey 2006, 131-132). I read Wagner's notion of invented cultures in the same manner. Harvey's suggestion of relating to spatial representations as non-hierarchical shares some of the same aspects as Wagner's conceptualization of the *invention of culture* and our way of relating to the world as dialectic, constantly affecting each other, yet non-causal. One does not lead to the other (Wagner 1981, 1986, 14-33). If we it is possible to say that people *invent culture,* it is possible to suggest that they *invent danger,* rather than simply discovering, or experiencing it.

Creating the danger

Lisa was a project manager, working for one of the larger humanitarian organizations present in Haiti. Originally stationed in Syria, she was in Haiti overlapping for the previous manager who had found a new job. Lisa's temporary position had lasted for six weeks, and I met her during the last week when she was finishing her stay, allowing her to take a few days off. I got to know

[70] *Material space, representation of space,* and *spaces of representation* (Harvey 2006, 130-132).

Lisa through my end of day surfing sessions in the warm waters near Kabik, as she practiced the sport as well. Relaxing in the sun as a guest in a beachfront hotel in Kabik, outside Jacmel, Lisa told me how she had been enjoying her brief job post in Haiti. Coming straight out of what she described to me as a warzone, she had expected something much worse from Haiti. From the "rumors" that surrounded Haiti, she had assumed that the effects of poverty would permeate every aspect of her surroundings. Now resting comfortably in the outdoor sitting section at a beachfront hotel sipping to a cocktail she said, "but it's actually quite nice".

Kabik was my home in the southeast[71] and where I lived when I conducted research in the province. It took about 40 minutes on a taptap, one-way from Jacmel. Kabik was a small community and only housed about 200 people. In Chapter 3, I described how Kabik was different. There, I was often referred to as *nég* and not *blan.* Furthermore, the access to food producing plants and trees along with the sea as a source of nutrition made the people less reliant on foreigners. As an effect, there was less "prying for a dollar" then other places I went with larger populations.

Lisa had trouble understanding why the community came across as so tranquil. She was curious and started asking me about living in one of the houses behind the beachfront hotel. I told her how the locals were nice, that I had made friends in the community, and that I never experienced any begging from them. Occasionally one or two people from the community that I hardly knew would ask me for money. Out of a local population of about 200, this could hardly be described as problematic. I told Lisa how many of the locals included me in the events that took place in the community, whether it was taking me to soccer matches, hunting for small squid in boats, or inviting me to street parties. Lisa said it sounded nice, but seemed to have a hard time grasping it. Yet she did not report any crude experiences that had happened to her, other than the occasional persistent beggar in Jacmel and a few shouts of *blan*. That day, I also mentioned to Lisa that in the evening I would be going to a local Vodou

[71] *Sud-Est* is the name of the province in French.

ceremony in the woods nearby with one of my Jacmelian friends, and welcomed her to join. Instantly she had a reaction: “Oh no. I’ve heard terrible things, people being hacked to death with machetes”.

Lisa and her skepticism of experiencing Vodou rituals can also be viewed as an imaginary. Anthropologist Wenzel Geissler (2005) has described imaginaries that has been referred to as “blood stealing” by some people in the Luo-speaking village in Western Kenya. As part of research project while studying for his Ph.D, Geissler accompanied a medical team collecting blood and stool samples from children and treating them for worms. One of these blood-stealing imaginaries said that the blood was extracted for the “international market” to be sold as a commodity to cure white-people and the wealthy African elite (Geissler 2005, 182). Geissler discovered that the blood-stealing imaginary represented reality for many people in the local Luo-community (Geissler 2005, 182-186). The blood-stealing imaginary can be applied to threatening, unclear social situations, and may answer questions concerning, where does the blood go? What is it used for? However, the social use of the idiom of blood stealing, depend on social situations and it is not always universally accepted (Geissler 2005).

While Geissler (2005) describe local Kenyans imaginaries about foreign medical researches, Lisa’s imagery can be characterized as the other way around; a foreigner’s imaginary about a local practice. Regardless if they are rooted in direct observations, social imaginaries can have a profound influence on people's understandings and actions. I tried to tell Lisa that the Vodou I knew was nothing like what she had heard. I described the two Vodou ceremonies I had been to already, and expected the third one to be much the same (and it was). They had contained lots of signing and dancing, and were open to everyone. Even the gay community played a visible role on the scene. My efforts seemed pointless. Despite our good tone, Lisa maintained her fears about Vodou and did not join me that evening. Although revealing to me that she had never had any direct encounters with Vodou, she decided to rely on her imaginary. Lisa was only one of many visitors I met in the field who expressed distorted ideas about Vodou.

With such misrepresentations of Vodou it might be interesting to ask: What is Vodou?

Vodou: controversies and misrepresentation

To answer what Vodou is it is best to start with what it is not. Alfred Métraux was an anthropologist who went out early in the field and document Haitian Vodou practice and ritual.[72] In his book, *Voodoo*[73] *in Haiti,* Métraux debunks myths about Haitian Vodou. He emphasizes that western culture has manufactured the religion as a perverse, occult practice that maintains contact with the devil (Métraux 1972 [1959], 15-24). This false image of Vodou as a strange and occult practice started in books (St John 2009 [1889], Seabrook 1929), and was reproduced in Hollywood movies that began in the 1930s, and survive to this day (Dubois 2013, 298, Cussans 2000, Boutros 2011).

Métraux clearly points out that Vodou is nothing more than a collection of rituals from belief systems of African origin. Like any other world religion's followers Vodou believers seek hope, faith and a remedy for their problems. As all slaves were baptized, 21st century Vodou often features a mix of Catholic faith and practice, incorporating saints into the religion's belief systems as *loa.* In the Vodou belief system there exists a God, "Le Bon Dieu", but this God is *idle* from the world created. Hence, this God can only be reached through praying to and communicating with other "loa"; god or spirit, which there exists many different of, e.g. a *loa* of the sea, agriculture, and fertility (Métraux 1972 [1959], 82-100), to name some.[74] The religion has sometimes been difficult to study, as its followers have been forced underground repeatedly. Sidney W. Mintz has pointed out how the idea that Vodou is something extraordinarily different is constructed by *us*, the onlookers, because we do not understand it (Mintz 1972 [1959]).

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[72] Although not the first, other noteworthy authors are Melville J. Herskovits (1964), Zoe Neale Hurston (2009 [1938]) work and Katherine Dunham's fieldwork in the mid-1930s (Aschenbrenner 2002, Dunham).

[73] Since newer publications in *academia* lean towards writing "vodou", not "voodoo" (Desmangles 1992, xi-17), I do the same except when referring to Métraux work.

[74] "The spirits, whatever their sex, incarnate themselves into men and women as they please" (Métraux 1972 [1959], 124). This means that notions such as homosexuality cannot be judged as in other religions, as it is simply looked upon as an expression from within the *loa* kingdom.

The perverse mystification of Vodou has even captured the imagination of science. In his book, *AIDS and Accusation […]*, Paul Farmer (1992) writes about the emergence of the syndrome in the 1980s and the blame put on the Haitian people, during the first decade of what was then a strange and new disease. Haitians were not only linked to being transmitters of the HIV-virus (Farmer 1992, 211), but also further blamed as being the originators of it. Scholarly articles suggested Haitian practices such as Vodou as a cause of the syndrome, which Farmers states very clearly is a false link (Farmer 1992, 3-4). When we met the four girls who were missionary workers in Haiti, we got to see exactly how this misconception of HIV/AIDS being almost a synonymous thing with Haitians when they linked living in close proximity to the Haitians with risk of being exposed to the virus.

Lisa's perception on Vodou can be described as mystifying what was unknown regardless of experience. This is an example of when a visitor negotiates a view of Haiti where negative assumptions that are not tested to see if they have truth to them. However, I would argue that Vodou is one of the *unique* aspects found in Haiti that sets it apart from many of the other Caribbean states. In Lisa's, one could say that she *failed to experience it* when she declined the Vodou invitation. However, Lisa was a *task-oriented* visitor and presumably never had an interest of experiencing Vodou and would rather stay away from it. However, going o going out into the Haitian space to "experience it" is not always unproblematic.

Vagabonds in the industry

Jean-Robert was a self-made "tourist guide", cigar salesman and "fixer". If you knew little about where to find art, special types of styled paintings, other artifacts, Jean-Robert would help you out, as long as you paid him. He was a known figure in the town where he operated would often approach visitors offering to sell cigars or give a guided tour. If the tour required transportation, Jean-Robert would use one of his acquaintances and incorporate that into the fee. Speaking of payment, this was in issue often left out of the initial conversation when attracting clients. Rather, Jean-Robert would often introduce

the price at the end. With some clients it worked well, others did not agree that the price was fair and would argue. For Jean-Robert, everything could be bargained for. His way of being had earned him a reputation around town for being a *vagabond.* A word often used when referring to someone who one could not trust or who would double-cross you.[75]

I got to experience these negative qualities first hand and what it meant to be a *vagabond* when I documented a tour to a Vodou ritual where Jean-Robert had brought a female tourist. Before I describe this ritual, I want to take describe what has been said about Vodou rituals in Haiti previously and connect it up with what I have experienced.

Vodou Rituals in *Sud-Est*

Alan Goldberg (1983) describes tourist staged Voodoo rituals taking place in the outskirts of Port-au-Prince. Through what he calls "staged authenticity" the "performers" in the ritual are able to communicate a sense of authenticity towards the tourists watching. By setting up against each other "characteristics of rituals", Goldberg separates "Tourist Voodoo" from "family based Vodun"[76] and "cult center Vodun" (1983, 483). Tourist Voodoo is different as it is staged, but the staged authenticity convinces the tourist that "something more than entertainment is happening" (Goldberg 1983, 492). This is based on the idea that there is an *authentic* and an *inauthentic* form of Vodou, and is a subject for another discussion.

None of the three distinct Vodou rituals that I have documented in the *Sud-Est* can be said to fit into the category of "staged authenticity". Simply put, there are not enough tourists in in Jacmel and the surrounding districts of *Sud-Est* to market to such a thing. The rituals I documented were distinctly different from each other in terms of attendance, size and location. However, Never did I encounter a ritual that was not open to everyone, local or foreign. However, all

[75] However, I also translate *vagabond* as a *trickster*. This is because the word *vagabond* was commonly used in other context as well. Especially when pulling a prank on someone or having a girlfriend but refraining from committing to strongly to her.
[76] Another way to write Vodou.

the rituals that I went to had almost only Haitians present. My first ceremony was promoted to *blans* in the sense that local Haitians would hang around Hotel Florita in Jacmel and offer to take guests for a fee. Regardless if there were foreigners, the rituals would go on anyhow, meaning that the amount of Haitians present was overwhelming compared to the amount of foreigners. The ritual itself had four tourists present, and was conveniently located just outside Jacmel town. However, during the ritual no special attention was directed at the tourists. Furthermore, the length was as long as the two other Vodou rituals I documented, lasting more than five hours.

8. Picture from the first Vodou ritual I attend. *Hunsis*[77] sing and move to the invigorating sounds produced by the *rara* band. Two more senior *hunsis* draw up a *Vèvè, a* Vodou symbol that will serve as the *loa*, Vodou gods' representation during the ritual.

The second ceremony was one with animal sacrifice, and had as far as I know only one tourist present. This is the ritual I will describe in detail below. The third ceremony I witnessed took place about a 45-minute walk into the jungle outside *Cayes-Jacmel*, about 15 km southeast of Jacmel. This ritual can be described as being very local. I only knew it by word of mouth from my friends in

[77] A *Hunsi* is a person initiated into the first degree of Vodou, assistant to the person the *Houngan,* the Vodou priest.

the gay community[78] in Jacmel. It commenced in the evening and went on for all night, and I was the only *visitor* there along with a bisexual American I had invited who wanted to see the Vodou and gay community in Haiti.[79]All the rituals I went to, although varying in size can be described as being at a concert event on a small venue with a big crowd, in the sense that they were all packed.

Ripped off at the Vodou Ritual

The ritual where Jean-Robert took his client happened, took place outside of town near a trafficked road. It happened during the daytime and was reputed to have animal sacrifice in it. When I arrived, Jean-Robert was already there with Alice, the client, a white woman from Europe in her late forties. Alice had come to Haiti for a second visit; however, this was her first trip to Jacmel and the South. She spoke French fluently but understood little Creole. Because she was a flight attendant, she had had the opportunity to travel many places in the world for a relatively low cost and sometimes free. Alice could be described as a visitor who was extremely rare. She was traveling around in Haiti openly, with a tourist guidebook, looking for interesting new experiences.

Back at the ritual the drums started beating. It is like flick of a switch as the music starts and the room is filled with an "electric feel" to it. Alice reveals to me that she and Jean-Robert had not talked about price at all. As we stand there watching the *rara*[80] band come to life as the *vaksen*, a cylindrical long bamboo blowing-horn, join in with the drums. The Vodou priest stand and talk with one of his three assistants wearing a white shirt, with two other assistants close by. The *hunsis* start dancing just as they had on the previous ritual I had seen. The ritual had begun. After a while, they start drawing patterns on the ground to

[78] Often subjected to mistreatment and accusations having a lifestyle that was "abomination", gays in Haiti were often looked upon as being "dégueulasse": "disgusting". However, in the Vodou religion, lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgendered (LGBT) people find an arena often met with acceptance. Generally, in Vodou the people are judged by their actions, and not their sexuality (Migraine-George 2014, Lescot and Magloire 2002). Homosexuals who seek refugee in the religion and participate in rituals are not given special treatment, but simply regarded as ordinary human beings like anybody else (Migraine-George 2014, 20). It should be noted that several of the Vodou gods have same-sex relations (Métraux 1972 [1959]).

[79] This was not the Vodou ritual where Jean-Robert took his client, but another separate event where I went.

[80] *Rara is a* traditional musical form in Haiti reminiscent of a kind of folk music.

evoke the spirits.[81] This is followed by more than an hour of dancing, drumbeats and singing, and rum consumption by both performers and onlookers. One of the Vodou priest's helpers brings in the first animal sacrifice, a goat. The priest communicates with what Jean-Robert claimed to be the spirit of the goat. Then, another assistant to the priest, wearing a yellow shirt, arrives with a knife in his hand. He sits the goat down on his knee and held the animal in his lap. While the other yellow shirt assistant pulls back the goat's head, exposing its throat, the other assistant slice the animal's throat in one strike. Blood spurts out and quickly forms a red dark puddle on the dirt floor beneath the animal. Alice looks away in disgust as the priest gathered his hands underneath the strong but decreasing stream of blood, flowing to the beat of the animal's declining heart rate. He let his hands fill up and then slurps the blood into his mouth, several times, becoming possessed by the spirit.

The ritual went on for a good two more hours, and contained another animal sacrifice of an adult bull. The rumor was that someone had sought a very big wish they wanted granted to have initiated a ceremony that contained so much animal sacrifice. According to my friends in the community animal sacrifice was not the norm in Vodou rituals. Rather it was practiced every so often when special occasions, such as asking for great wishes to be granted, called for it. The slaying of the bull marked the last slaying of the day and the ritual took a break. It had gone on for about four hours. The ritual would continue in the evening. In the meantime, the dead animals would be skinned, gutted and prepared for eating. People slowly dispersed to rest and recuperate. Some would return for the evening ceremony. Jean-Robert, Alice and I, were done and walked to the main road. The Vodou temple was only meters away from it. At this point, Jean-Robert started insisting on getting paid. However, instead of asking for payment he claimed that the *moto-driver* who had taken them there was to receive 2500 gourdes for staying put and waiting. Alice looked devastated. The amount was equivalent of more than $60 US at the time, and Jean-Robert had not said anything about price up until this. Instantly they started arguing.

[81] This can be seen in photo nr.8. For a more detailed description of Voodoo ritual I recommend reading Alfred Métraux's (1972 [1959]) book *Voodoo in Haiti*. I describe the ritual only superficially at best here.

"I don't want to pay 2500 gourdes for a moped ride that I can get for 50 gourdes on the street, just for bringing me here", Alice cried out.

Jean-Robert told her to negotiate with the driver, and claimed that the debt Alice had was with him. The dispute kept on like this for several minutes. Alice did not want to pay the surprising fee and Jean-Robert kept insisting that she should negotiate. This made Alice furious.

"You don't have to think I am rich because I am white", Alice said growing more desperate. When it looked as if the arguing would not seize everything changed in an instant. The driver agreed to take Alice back to her where she was staying without any further discussion on price, and away they went.[82] She was returned safely and given no further incentives to pay. It seemed like this time, jean-Robert's *vagabond* ways had failed. I met up with Alice later in the evening. The argument had come across as extremely uncomfortable for Alice. She said that she did not want to wind up in such a situations again, suggesting that she should perhaps stop visiting regions that were so impoverished that she kept feeling so guilty about her having more wealth than many of the people around her.

Summary

In this chapter I have showed how an open space policy might work though ta small-scale business serving as medium to explore Jacmel's culture. I showed how a regulated tourist space might be of relevance for Haiti, and further continued the discussion on Haiti as a negotiated space from the point of view of visitors. By introducing Harvey's use of Lefebvre's spatial analysis and Wagner's *invention of culture*, I have tried to provide the reader with a framework for understanding of how space is constantly created and negotiated by people. I

[82] I was not at ease with the situation myself. After the incident I took a *taptap* into town to look for Alice where she was staying and to make sure she was all right. From here on we conducted the interview, which she had agreed upon during the ritual. I let her go on the *moto* since it was an acquaintance of Jean-Robert. And no matter how displeased he was with his failed *vagabonding* in this case, he was dependent on his reputation to keep doing what he was doing. Hence, I believed that she would not be hurt, and that he had seen that the situation could not be resolved and decided that he would simply have to let this one go. Also, Jean-Robert did not have a reputation of ever hurting anyone physically.

have led three discussions linking this theory up with ethnography. Firstly, how an open space policy can function well through a small-scale business like Hotel Florita. Secondly, how people can be said to construct their realities, and what can happen if some of these constructs are not contextualized. Lisa never got the chance to test her views about Vodou by going to a ritual and actually discovering what went on there. Thirdly, I showed what can happen if a person ventures into the Haiti rather uncritically. Alice winded up in a situation where she felt extremely uncomfortable, so much that she considered not going to a developing country ever again.

In the next and final chapter I will conclude this thesis by suggesting that all the actors in my thesis can be viewed as *spacemakers.* As I will argue that Haiti takes a certain spatial shape based on how people move around in Haiti and also how they talk about it without necessarily going anywhere. I will suggest why small-scale businesses in Haitian tourism are important for showing visitors Haiti and how they are able to bring the visitors near the Haitian experience, which is to many visitors considered *unique* and enjoyable.

6| *Spacemakers* in the Haitian tourist space

In the previous chapter I discussed the *open space policy* of the Ministry of Tourism and positive and negative experiences shared by visitors venturing openly out into Haiti.

This last and final chapter contains a summary of the work done in the thesis and a conclusion. By doing so I aim to show the reader how actors in this thesis are *spacemakers.* But first, a brief summary of what the former chapters have dealt with.

Summary of the chapters

I argue that the pieces of theory used in this thesis, are all perspectives, or *perceptions* if you like, that may help further the understanding of something we might not always think twice about, our opinions about the world we move around in, and how they form. Whether dealing with Lefebvre's (1991 [1974]) threefold division of space and Harvey's (2006) appliance of it, or Anderson's (1991 [1983]) "imagined communities", or Wagner's (1981) "invention of culture"[83] (to name some), the essence that remains the same in all these theoretical contributions. The individual participates in constructing his or her own reality.

In Chapter 2, I described how Haiti's history makes up the spatial shape of Haiti as a *contested space* today. In an economy that is largely dependent on foreign aid to function, tourism is sought out as a measure to strengthen Haiti's economy. However, we learn that Haiti struggles with more than just visitors concerns about security. Stigma, in is also an issue. As we move on into Chapter 3, I discussed how the use of the word *blan* may contribute to widening the gap between *hosts* and *guests.* However, in this chapter I suggest that there might be more to the word as I introduce ethnography that challenged the view that all foreigners are always *blans*. By suggesting that there are more ways to view the *blan/nèg* discourse in Haiti I move on to a subject that is discussed in Chapter 4.

[83] Here, I mention only some of the key theory used in the thesis, and not all.

Here, I suggest that ultimately it is the visitor who is responsible for determining what his or her viewpoint of Haiti will be. I referred to this as *negotiating views.* This is another way of discussing *spacemaking* practices. In this chapter, we learn that the different spatial shapes Haiti has amongst visitors, occurs through movement, and sometimes lack of movement, in Haiti's landscape. The idea that visitors create their own impression of Haiti is further developed in Chapter 5. I suggest that not only do visitors negotiate their views of Haiti, but also that they *construct* them, sometimes based on what others have said before. I claim that the invitation from the Ministry of Tourism to come "experience it" is an *open space policy,* which is realized when the visitor has come to Haiti, spent time there and moved to around and explored the country. However, currently the ministry has little ability to make sure that the imaginaries created through promotional campaigns directed at tourists, are experienced by visitors in a manner that is favorable to the ministry. Unlike its neighboring country, Haiti has not developed large "tourist zones". I only saw the early stages of the ministry's effort to develop tourist regions with "tourist zones" along the North, Acadins and Carribean coast. See appendix B.

Conclusion

So, how can a *contested space* become a *tourist space*? The simple answer would be; through movement in Haiti's physical landscape during which the visitor has positive experiences that contribute to negotiating a positive view of Haiti. However, as I have demonstrated in this thesis, this is not always so easy. The various experiences from people represented in this thesis show how the social imaginary of Haiti is constructed in different ways. What some may find absolutely safe, others may find scary or problematic. Haiti is made and remade both by *hosts* and *guests.* However, it is the visitors who "take back their experience with them", shaping ideas of Haiti abroad. Visitors relate to the historical legacy of the country, shaped by violence and exclusion, and are further guided by their experiences shaped by government policies on tourism and the intentions of tourist businesses.

At the time of my fieldwork, I would suggest that Haiti was a *tourist space* in the sense that it had beautiful beaches, interesting cuisine, and exciting history to experience. In other words, Haiti already possesses many of the features that the *tourist gaze* might expect. In a space where the *unique* aspects of Caribbean culture that set Haiti apart are promoted, the Ministry of Tourism is dependent on having structures available that will help bring out these *positive features* of Haiti. Haiti's diverse and "fascinating" characteristics are not clean-cut features that the visitor meets immediately upon arrival. Rather, they are found in various cities, historical sites, art pieces, certain hotels and restaurants, and the people that one meets as a visitor in the country. Aspects of Haiti's *unique* culture, such as Vodou, sometimes demand interpretation. The reproduction of negative stereotypes of the country is problematic for Haiti as a tourist destination, especially when tourism is set to be an important income for the nation. Small-scale businesses involved in tourism have the potential of functioning as a mediator between visitors and their encounter with Haiti. They can enable visitors to experience a Haiti that produces positive connotations.

The descriptions from different actors in this thesis show how people experience life in Haiti through how and where they move around in the country. Whether they are visitors, local business owners, or people within the Ministry of Tourism, these *spacemakers* contribute to making and remaking the spatial shape of Haiti, which captures people's imaginations. By using a spatial analysis of Haiti as socially constructed space, I have contextualized the various spatial shapes of Haiti featured amongst these *spacemakers* who are responsible for ascribing meanings to the *contested space* of Haiti. Part of uncovering this landscape has been asking the question, what is rooted in these imaginaries? Haiti as a physical landscape, a material space where people move around, may come across as chaotic and difficult to orientate oneself in as a foreigner. This is part of the challenge for the concept of *Unique Haiti* and the invitation to come "experience it". However, as I have displayed in the ethnography, what seems to set apart people's imaginaries of Haiti is precisely their experience through movement. Visitors who seek to challenge imaginaries held about Haiti, whether their own or others', sometimes get to experience what can be described as *unique.*

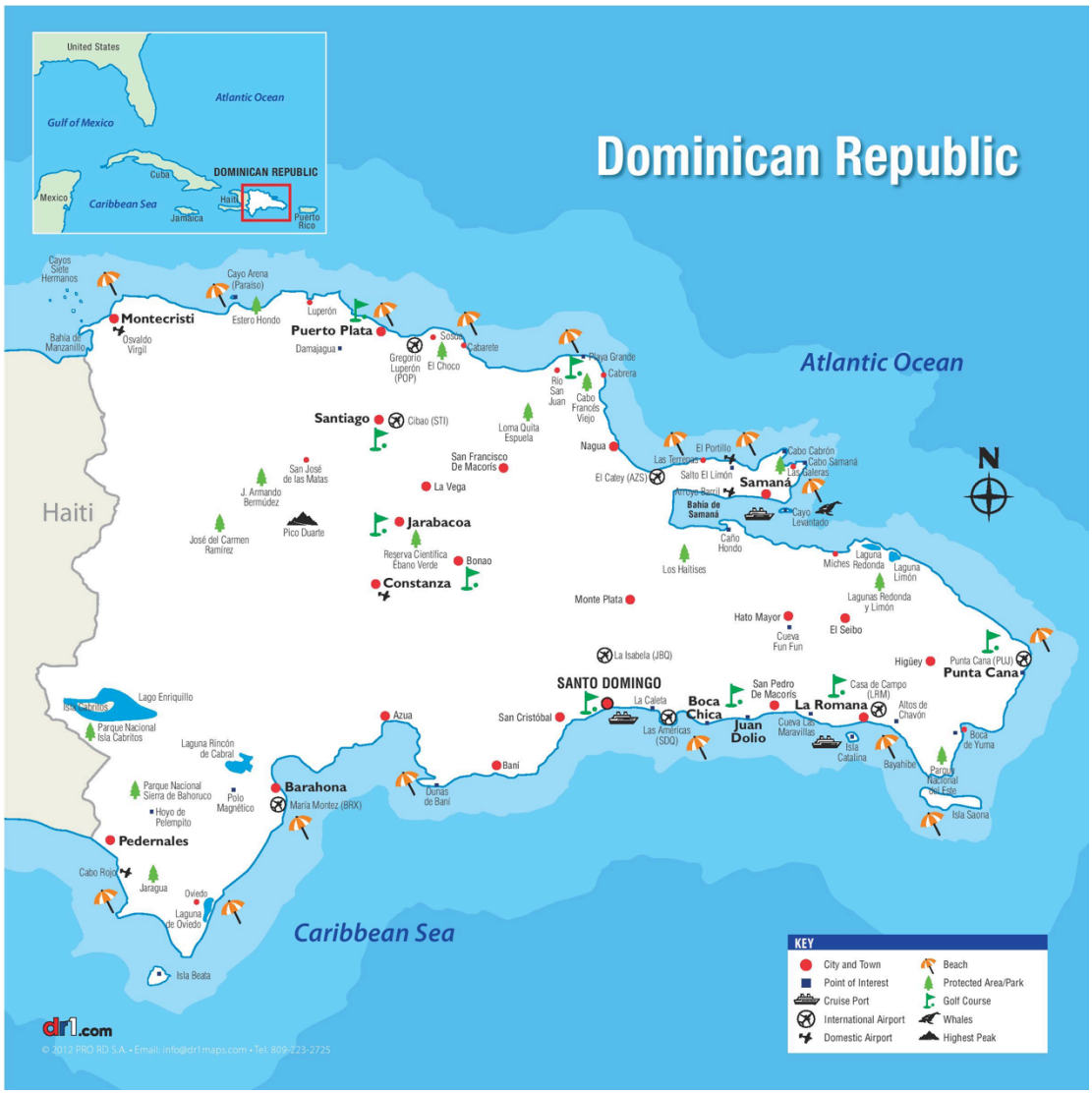
As the tourist industry in Haiti further develops, part of making the previous *contested space* of Haiti a *tourist space* is allowing the visitor to get to experience *Unique Haiti*, rather than remaining in an enclave that does not provide this experience. Many of the small-scale businesses in Haiti have the possibility of facilitating this experience before further "tourist zones" are developed. Making these services visible and available for tourists may allow for further *spacemaking* to take place amongst visitors, which will benefit Haiti's image as a viable tourist destination. Thus, a *contested space* becomes a *tourist space* not only through movement in the physical landscape, but also through contextualizing some of the experiences had in this landscape. Some of the small-scale businesses in Haitian tourism have the ability to provide this contextualization. In this way, *Unique Haiti* can be remade as a positive tourist space by its visitors.

A final thought

On a final note, I would like to point out that the tourism industry in a country is often concerned with adapting itself to visitors in order to accommodate their needs and to make money. However, if the industry in Haiti adapts too much to these perceived needs, the country may risk losing its *unique* aspect. With this in mind, I would like to end with a quote from my informant, Jørgen Leth, when I asked him what Haitians should do to attract more visitor: ”jeg synes de skal bare være sig selv”: “I think they should just be themselves”.

Appendixes

A.

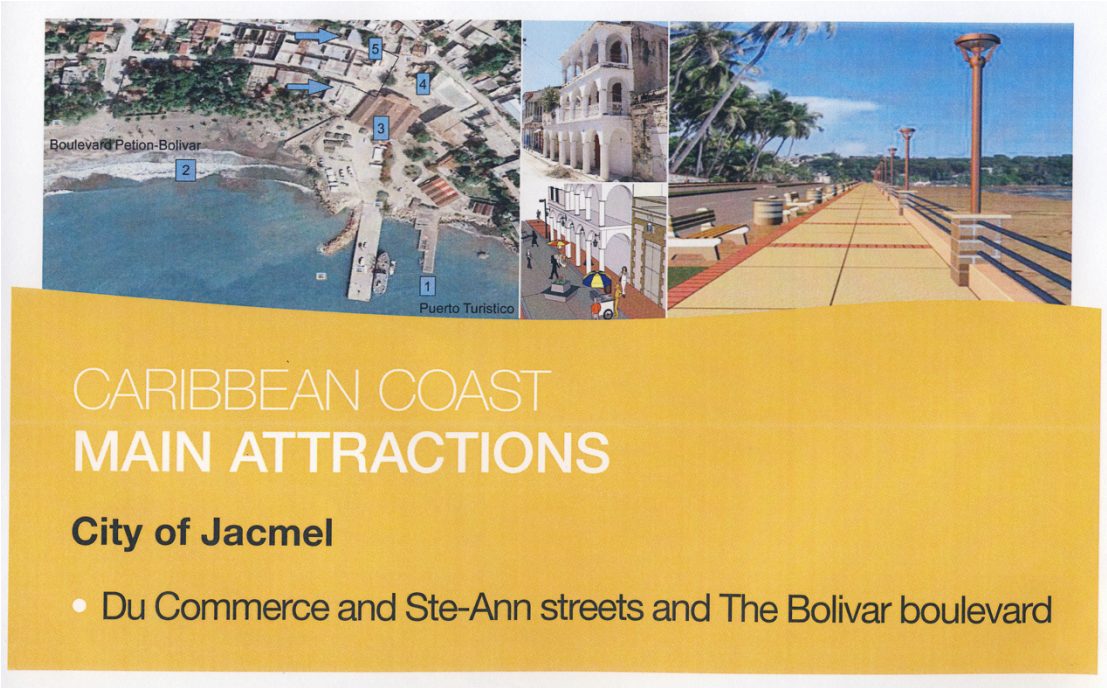


1. Tourist regions along the coastline of the Dominican Republic, accentuating beaches, cities and towns, point of interests, recreational activities and airports. Source of map: (Dominican Republic Tourism Ministry 2015).

B.

1. Tourist regions in Haiti under development. From the Ministry of Tourism's action plan of May 2012.

C.



3. The Ministry of Tourism's suggestion for a "tourist zone" in Jacmel's city center, port and beach area.

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